

DOCTORAL THESIS

Counselling psychologists' talk of 'authenticity': exploring the implications of 'authenticity' discourse for ethical practice

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**Counselling psychologists' talk of 'authenticity': exploring the
implications of 'authenticity' discourse for ethical practice.**

by

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how ‘authenticity’ is constructed in counselling psychology and asks what the ethical implications of this commonly taken-for-granted value might be. A discourse analytic approach known as ‘critical discursive psychology’ was used to examine eight counselling psychologists’ talk of ‘authenticity’ in semi-structured interviews. The analysis suggested that counselling psychologists may draw on a number of interpretative repertoires regarding ‘authenticity’, using them to establish their identity and negotiate their relationships with clients. However, taken together these repertoires might be said to form an ‘authenticity ideal’, which often functions to position the therapist as authentic and the client as inauthentic. Furthermore, in drawing upon various psychotherapeutic and humanistic discourses, the participants in this study appeared to be distanced from their power in positioning clients as inauthentic, although they demonstrated a problematizing of their own ‘authenticity’ in relation to the need for professional boundaries.

This research suggests that talk of ‘authenticity’ tends to locate therapeutic action within a humanistic moral discourse of self-unity. This is of concern because the emphasis on individualism may lead therapists to underestimate the social and relational context of their clients’ difficulties. It should be noted that this critique falls not on the individuals involved in this research, for their answers were consistent with a range of accepted theoretical guidelines; but instead upon the reification of authenticity within counselling psychology and Western society in general.

The participants in this study further problematized ‘authenticity’ in terms of needing to balance it with the demands of training and employment organisations. It was found that

both institutional power and individual embodiment may act as ‘extra-discursive’ influences and constraints upon ‘authenticity’ discourse; however, the methodological feasibility of a critical-realist epistemology within discursive research is questioned. The limitations of the research findings and their relevance for reflexive practice are considered.

Word count: 298

Key words: Authenticity, counselling psychology, ethics, discourse analysis, critical discursive psychology.

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1. PREFACE

1.1 Situating the research author

Reflexive research requires the author of a project to ‘engage in explicit self-aware meta-analysis’ (Finlay, 2002a: 209). It is based on the idea that factors such as culture, social convention, selective attention, politics, ideology, power and so forth, will all permeate the research activity (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). In accordance with this view, it has been argued that the use of an anonymous voice in research accounts acts to mystify the person of the writer, hiding the context and background that they are bringing to their work and thus creating a false impression of objectivity (Clare & Hamilton, 2003). As a reflexive approach, discourse analysis therefore encourages researchers to ground their accounts in the personal. The aim of this is not to provide a ‘confessional tale’ (Van Maanen, 1988) but rather to position the research author within the project and the wider social world of the research (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). In keeping with such a tradition, this preface will provide an outline of the influences that led me to research the values underlying counselling psychology and in particular the notion of ‘authenticity’¹.

I first encountered academic psychology approximately sixteen years ago, when I undertook an A’level in the subject at college. During that time I was encouraged to view psychology as ‘the science of mind and behaviour’; a description that was further reinforced as I progressed to study it at university and gained a Bachelor of Science degree. As appears typical in many undergraduate psychology programmes, the teaching included such subjects as neurology, health psychology, and psychopathology. There was an emphasis on gaining

¹ Inverted commas are used throughout this report to indicate a taken-for-granted concept that the research is bringing into question.

competence in statistical analysis and students were required to complete a quantitative research dissertation. Successful completion of the degree conferred the 'Graduate Basis for Registration' (GBR) with the British Psychological Society; this being a national requirement for progression to further training as a counselling psychologist. It could be said that my early experience of psychology immersed me in the discourses of empiricism, professionalism and the bio-medical model.

Following university I worked for four years in the field of learning disabilities and for a further two and half within domestic violence services, both primarily in the voluntary sector. I also completed a year-long diploma in person-centred counselling. In contrast to my previous education, I found that my work and new training encouraged a more phenomenological approach to supporting people. My early employment coincided with a general concern in the UK to increase the provision of 'person-centred planning' for people with learning disabilities and I worked for a charity that promoted an ethos of empowerment, choice and respect. This was later echoed in my domestic violence employment, where the staff were trained to provide non-directive and empathic support. Altogether, my experience encouraged a confidence in humanist values and the person-centred notions of empathy, unconditional-positive-regard and congruence (Rogers, 1951/1961). I believed that these values would provide a solid foundation upon which to base my future counselling practice.

Pica (1998: 361) has noted: 'struggling with ambiguity is one of those unspoken aspects of clinical training that students do not comprehend until they begin their graduate program'. Although my work had exposed me to a diversity of individuals experiencing psychological distress, I commenced clinical training with a somewhat naive certainty about psychotherapeutic theory. As I engaged for the first time with ideas from such arenas as

existential philosophy, social constructionism and postmodernism, I began to appreciate the depth of ontological and epistemological conflict that exists within counselling psychology (Strawbridge, 2003; Williams & Irving, 1996). For example, it has been said that counselling psychology is embedded in a humanistic value base (Cooper, 2009; Orlans & Van Scoyoc 2008), a central aim being to honour the client's subjectivity and capacity for self-determination (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010); however, as my experience demonstrates, this phenomenological approach is at odds with the empiricism of counselling psychology's pre-requisite (undergraduate) training. This indicates an epistemological clash which continues in the later teaching of 'evidence-based' models of therapy and within the wider context of occupational opportunity, as shaped by the UK government's recent preference for randomized control trials and cognitive behavioural therapy (Lees, 2008; Pilgrim, 2009).

Postmodernism cautions that values are culturally determined. This highlights a need for ongoing reflexivity in deciding what constitutes ethical practice. As I progressed with my training I realised that counselling values might easily be taken for granted, shaped by a particular school of thought and their 'goodness' assumed rather than understood as a social construction. I wondered in what ways such values may serve a function and noted for example how counselling psychology is sometimes defined as having a 'relational' approach in order to differentiate it from other more medically orientated professions (James & Bellamy, 2010). I became interested in how counselling psychologists (myself included) might negotiate their values in light of their profession's conflicted foundation and the pervasiveness of empiricist and medical-model discourses in mental health settings (Freeth, 2007).

I was particularly drawn to exploring ‘authenticity’ because of the attention it was given in the teaching of both person-centred therapy and existential philosophy during the first year of my doctoral studies. As part of this learning, it became apparent that within person-centred counselling ‘authenticity is synonymous with congruence’ (Tudor & Worrall, 2006: 156), being demonstrated by someone ‘who can relate to people directly and uniquely... coming from the centre, not from a role.’ (Rowan, 2001: 40). In contrast, existential philosophy approaches the self as a relational construct without a unitary inner centre, thus opening up ideas such as Heidegger’s (1927/1962) argument that inauthenticity is as much a part of our being as authenticity. If inauthenticity is considered ontological then one implication is that therapists should avoid prescribing an ethical code of values to it (Garza, 2006).

Counselling psychology is sometimes described as a postmodern discipline which welcomes plurality (e.g. Milton, 2010). As such, differences in the meaning of authenticity might be expected and embraced. Indeed, as I began to explore the literature on authenticity I soon encountered a diverse and complex range of notions. However, discussion with colleagues suggested that such differences are often overlooked by a more common agreement that authenticity is important and ‘good’. My impression was that authenticity is often linked to the idea of ‘being in touch with’, or expressing, an ‘authentic inner self’ and I wondered whether this might manifest in therapy as an implicit goal for clients.

The conflicted ontological basis of counselling psychology presents a source of potential difficulty for practitioners. The importance generally attributed to the therapeutic relationship reflects an acknowledgement of relational factors in constructing ‘the self’ (Gergen, 1995), which ties in with a postmodern ontology whereby ‘the self’ is understood to

be continually constructed through that which a person is 'subject to', e.g. language and culture (Hansen, 2004). However, this conflicts with the idea of a pre-given or more separate inner self, as found in humanism and much traditional psychotherapeutic theory. Furthermore, postmodernism has been criticised for the ethical nihilism risked by relativist thinking, and in terms of the self, for encouraging a form of idealism which fails to acknowledge the material aspects of embodiment (e.g. Harré, 1999). Alternatively, the individualism exemplified in humanism has been criticized for minimizing the significance of the therapist's assumptions and practices, and for locating client difficulties within the individual without due regard for the social, cultural or political context within which individuals operate (Sinclair, 2007). Such conflicted ontology offers a range of possible discourses regarding authenticity, for example a postmodern perspective may prompt talk of 'intersubjectivity', whereas a modernist view is more likely to invoke the notion of a 'true / authentic self'. Despite counselling psychology's claims to postmodernism, its Western practitioners are positioned within strongly individualistic societies, which Guigon (2004) argues have idealized the notion of the 'authentic self'. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising if practitioners frequently draw upon this discourse in defining themselves and their work.

Counselling discourse provides a framework within which people may be assisted to create, or to reinvent, their identity (Foucault, 1981). Russell (1999) argues that it also offers therapists preconceived notions of authentic selfhood which they may seek to reveal. If counselling psychology is regarded as a technology of subjectivity, the ethical need for a reflexive engagement with the notion of authenticity becomes clear.

1.2 Introducing the research

Research that focuses specifically on authenticity in counselling is sparse. Therefore the rationale for choosing this topic was to open up a taken-for-granted foundational value, to explore the ways in which it is constructed and to consider the implications of these constructions for ethical practice. I was interested to see how social conditions (such as training and paid employment) might offer a range of possible ways-of-being in relation to ‘authenticity’, which counselling psychologists may then appropriate (Willig, 1999a). I also wished to consider in what ways constructions of authenticity may be used (e.g. permitting or limiting action). To this end, a discourse analysis approach known as critical discursive psychology was used to explore counselling psychologists’ talk of ‘authenticity’.

Although drawing strongly on social constructionism, I decided to adopt a critical-realist epistemology. This holds that whilst language constructs social realities, the limitations and possibilities of the material world will interact with and constrain these constructions. It also holds that it is possible for research to address the ‘non-discursive’, for example the idea that ‘authenticity’ might be constrained by embodiment or the material power of institutions (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). This thesis therefore also explores the methodological feasibility of using a critical realist approach within a discursive study such as this.

1.3 The use of reflexive boxes

Reflexive research recognises that total objective detachment is not possible and therefore ‘the researcher’s influence must be taken into account and even utilized’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 17). There are a variety of ways by which to approach this reflexive aim, one being to provide biographical details (as above), however, the intention is ‘to use personal

revelation not as an end in itself but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight' (Finlay, 2002a: 215). Reflexive methodologies require an ongoing reflexive engagement with both the research process and its written presentation (Finlay, 2002b). For this reason, a series of reflexive boxes will be placed at various points throughout the following report, their aim being to facilitate explication of the forces at work in the production of the main text. The use of a separately boxed area is conceptualized as providing a space which the author can use to step out of the main body of the account and explore a specific issue or point of contention (Edwards & Potter, 1992). It is intended that these reflexive summaries will complement (rather than replace) the reflexivity within the main text.

1.4 Reflexive box 1

In the above preface I have attempted to contextualise the research idea and to orientate the reader to the background motivations for conducting this research. I commenced training with a strong humanistic value base, relatively unaware of the epistemological and ontological conflicts within counselling psychology; however, as I began to appreciate and identify with postmodern and social constructionist approaches to counselling, my idealistic foundation was challenged. I was then particularly perplexed by the way in which certain philosophical contradictions appeared to be 'brushed over' and I began to question counselling psychology as a discipline. This provided the incentive to explore taken for granted counselling psychology values, with authenticity being a prime example.

Whilst the identification of biographical and disciplinary influences may help to situate me as the research author, Finlay (2002a) argues that introspection must be balanced with critical self-analysis in order to be of value and to avoid the charge of self-indulgence. It is therefore worth addressing the effects of my having had my values and chosen profession thrown into doubt. For example, whilst I believe this questioning helped me to develop a more critical and reflexive understanding, it was also somewhat anxiety producing. It is possible that my choice to use a critical-realist framework was a defence against ontological anxiety, i.e. that which may have arisen in response to a relativist deconstruction of my values, profession and own 'authenticity'. However, I consciously chose a critical-realist framework because it appeared to fit my experiential positioning between epistemologies, whilst also reflecting the relativist-realist tension that is inherent to counselling psychology as a whole.

The above preface and indeed the text in this reflexive box, both attempt to capture the 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault, 1980) from which this research emerged. However offering a biographical account is problematic because it implies that a transparent telling of the 'truth' is possible. If language is understood to construct social reality, then it must be acknowledged that an account such as this provides just one of many possible narratives (Hansen, 2005). It is also ontologically problematic to suggest a coherent self-narrative, raising the question of whether it really is inevitable that an explicit situating of the researcher will result in a better account of the research.

Coyle (2006) argues that it would be disingenuous of discourse analysts to demonstrate the constitutive function of other people's language use whilst making an exception for their own. This could be applied as equally to the above preface as to the text within an interview transcription. For example, a brief discursive analysis of the above 'situating the research author' text suggests that it performs a number of rhetorical functions. These include positioning the author as well-educated and experienced (e.g. having first begun to study psychology 'approximately sixteen years ago'), as well as inquisitive and critical (e.g. by choosing 'to open up a taken for granted foundational value'). The function of such positioning is arguably to establish the credibility of the author and demonstrate characteristics that are presumably desirable in a researcher. The overall emphasis on counselling psychology's complex and conflicted epistemological and ontological basis could be seen to function as a defence against any criticism pertaining to the research findings, whilst the positioning of the author as critical and reflexive might act to confer legitimacy on the ensuing analysis.

Of course this reflexive box is equally a constructed text and subject to the same criticisms as outlined above. It would be possible to deconstruct this text in just the same way (for an example of this approach see Ashmore, 1989), however this sets up a potential spiral of analysis in which each representation is further deconstructed, with each deconstruction paradoxically acting as a rhetorical strategy to claim authority and credibility (Derrida, 1980). As Finlay (2002a: 226) notes, the possibility of an infinite regress may result in 'interminable deconstructions of deconstructions where all meaning gets lost'. This text (and the research as a whole) therefore attempts to strike a balance

between critical deconstruction and 'relativist nihilism', in effect taking a critical realist position whereby reflexive writing 'attempts to capture something of a 'real' story while acknowledging its partial, tentative status' (Finlay, 2002a: 224).

2. INTRODUCTION

‘Counselling Psychology... emphasizes the subjective experience of clients... the notion of ‘doing something to’ clients is replaced by that of ‘being with’ and the core conditions of empathy, acceptance and authenticity are paramount whatever the therapeutic modality’

(Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010:11)

The above quote, taken from the most recent edition of the ‘Handbook of Counselling Psychology’, illustrates some of the importance commonly attributed to ‘authenticity’. Indeed as a central tenet of both humanist and existential philosophy, it is arguably one of counselling psychology’s foundational values. The term ‘authenticity’ is open to numerous interpretations and is often used to refer to such different things as sincerity, truthfulness and originality; however, in a review of the literature regarding authenticity, Vannini & Franzese (2008: 1621) argue that it is most precisely conceptualized as ‘the feeling and practice of being true to oneself and to others’. The persuasiveness and apparent common-sense simplicity of this latter definition is eloquently conveyed in Shakespeare’s well-known dictum:

This above all: to thine own self be true

And it doth follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

(Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act 1, 3:78)

Building on the work of social commentators such as Bell (1976) and Lasch (1979), several contemporary writers (e.g. Guigon, 2004; Potter, 2010) have noted that such an appreciation of authenticity is on the ascendancy in Western society, with an increasing number of individuals aspiring to find their ‘true selves’, live more ‘authentic lives’ and enjoy more ‘authentic relationships’. They argue that a vast array of marketed life-styles and commodities fuel such desires, ably assisted by popular psychology and the ‘self-help’ industry. They caution that the notion of ‘authenticity’ is assumed to be good, when in fact it may be viewed as a ‘hoax’ (Potter, 2010); a taken-for-granted value which promises much but actually magnifies the alienation of modern day life by encouraging a self-centred and competitive individualism.

Counselling psychology has been described as ‘postmodern and multi-modal in nature’ (Milton, 2010: xxiii); however, practitioners must navigate a conflicted epistemological and ontological field, and it appears that fundamentally modernist assumptions remain highly influential (see literature review). This research is therefore interested in exploring how counselling psychologists construct ‘authenticity’, in what ways such constructions are used (e.g. to limit or justify action), and what the ethical implications may be. In doing so it considers how ‘authenticity’ may be shaped by social conditions (e.g. training or paid employment) and what possible ways-of-being may be offered to practitioners and clients as a result. Although several noteworthy philosophical works have addressed the topic of authenticity, there is little empirical research in the area and there exists no prior examination of how authenticity discourse may shape the therapeutic relationship.

This research uses a discourse analytic approach known as ‘critical discursive psychology’ (Adams, 2001; Edley & Wetherell, 2001) to explore the talk of eight counselling psychologists, using semi-structured interviews. Critical discursive psychology addresses not only discursive practice (how participants construct and negotiate meaning), but also the availability of discursive resources (how social and institutional frameworks provide and shape constructions). This allows for the recognition of people as both producers and products of discourse (Billig, 1991). The research is framed within a critical-realist epistemology (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007), which holds that whilst language constructs social realities, the limitations and possibilities of the material world will interact with and constrain these constructions. As such, a number of ‘extra-discursive’ influences or constraints upon ‘authenticity’ are tentatively proposed. Methodologically, this research questions whether it is possible to authentically research authenticity. It also addresses the epistemological tension between realism and relativism and evaluates the use of a critical-realist approach in a discursive study such as this.

The following chapters give an account of the research process; however, prior to outlining them it is worth acknowledging that they provide just one possible, and hopefully plausible, way of ordering the research data. For ease of reading, the term ‘therapist’ and ‘counselling psychologist’ will be used interchangeably. The literature review provides an extensive, though by no means exhaustive, account of counselling psychology and authenticity; the aim being to contextualise the research, demonstrate the variety of potential authenticity constructions presently available and problematize the taken-for-granted nature of ‘authenticity’. The methodology chapter outlines the ontological, epistemological and axiological basis of the research and the method chapter provides an account of the specific research design. The results chapter presents the research findings, supported by a range of

transcript extracts. The thesis then concludes with a discussion chapter, which summarizes the research, explores the implications for ethical practice and evaluates the chosen methodology. The limitations of the study and the possibilities for future research are also addressed in this final section.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to counselling psychology and authenticity, its aim being to contextualise the present study, to demonstrate the variety of potential authenticity constructions available and finally to problematize authenticity as a taken-for-granted value. Although it is not possible to provide an exhaustive account of ‘authenticity’, the intention is to offer an extensive and integrated exploration of relevant discourse. The literature review of a discursive study plays an integral role in the research process, for as Yardley (2000: 220) advises: an ‘awareness of the different perspectives and complex arguments that can be brought to bear on the subject provides the researcher with the scholastic tools to develop a more profound and far-reaching analysis’.

The following review begins by locating this study within the current research literature, after which it is organised into four broad sections. The first section sets out to provide a context for the study by outlining a brief history of counselling psychology and its inherent epistemological and ontological conflicts. The second section similarly provides a genealogical account of the concept of ‘authenticity’, with specific attention given to existential philosophy. The review then goes on to consider the institutional influence of counselling psychology training and regulation, with a focus on authenticity in relation to professional socialisation and the increasing professionalisation of counselling psychology. The fourth and final section explores authenticity in relation to counselling psychology practice; examining differences in theoretical approach, the notion of the therapeutic relationship and the issue of ethics. While it is clearly beyond the scope of this review to give a detailed description of all the ways that authenticity is constructed and enacted within

psychotherapy, reference is made to the person-centred, psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural schools of thought. The review ends with a summary, followed by a reflexive analysis.

3.2 Locating the present study in the research literature

Despite a long tradition of theoretical debate within such fields as philosophy and psychology, the topic of authenticity has generated relatively limited empirical research. An exception to this may be found within the discipline of cultural studies, although Vannini & Williams (2009: 12) note that ‘systematic discussions on authenticity have become more common within social psychology and the sociology of culture only in the last fifteen years or so’, with much of the resultant research being focused on authenticity in relation to group membership and sub-cultural identity (e.g. Levitt & Hiestand, 2004; Riley & Cahill, 2005; Williams, 2006). Authenticity has also recently emerged as a popular topic within business and management studies, particularly in relation to the qualities that might engender ‘authentic leadership’ (e.g. Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Chan et al., 2005; Ladkin & Taylor, 2010). However, as Harter (2005: 382) observes, ‘there is no single, coherent body of literature on authentic self-behaviour, no bedrock of knowledge’.

Wood et al. (2008: 385) suggest that research into authenticity has been made difficult because of ‘definitional confusion regarding the construct’. They note that ‘the study of authenticity has largely been neglected in empirical psychology’ (p.385) and cite Lopez & Rice (2006) as lamenting ‘the virtual absence of available measures of the construct’ (p.362). Their solution has been to develop a measure of dispositional authenticity, the ‘Authenticity Scale’, arguing that authenticity is a personality trait that can be assessed (Wood et al., 2008). Goldman & Kernis (2002) have similarly developed the ‘Authenticity Inventory’: an

assessment tool which breaks authenticity into four related, yet independent components, these being awareness (of one's 'true' self, feelings, motives etc), unbiased processing (accepting feedback without defensiveness or 'interpretative distortions'), behaviour (acting in accord with one's values, preferences and needs), and relational orientation (striving for openness and truthfulness in relationships). Such research opens up questions about what it means to be authentic and the impact that such an 'attribute' or 'attitude' might have. However, from a perspective informed by social constructionism, such quantitative studies are flawed, not least because they are based on the modernist premise of a unified 'true' or 'core' self. It is also unclear what meaning may lie within a 'unit' of authenticity along a scale, and by what standards an authenticity instrument might be validated.

Very little research (either quantitative or qualitative) has specifically addressed the concept of authenticity in terms of counselling or psychotherapy practice, although much attention has been directed towards understanding the qualities that may contribute to the success or failure of the therapeutic alliance (Cooper, 2008). A number of these qualities may be linked with the discourse of authenticity, for example, Grafanaki & McLeod (1995) qualitatively explored 'congruence' (Rogers, 1957) within an initial person-centred counselling session and found that the most 'helpful event', as defined by the client, occurred when the therapist was 'relating as a person and not as a professional, and everything was happening naturally, without much thinking' (p.316). Therefore whilst it is possible to construct 'congruence' and 'authenticity' in significantly different ways, there is also considerable overlap in their use and accepted meaning. Further qualities and constructs that may be of particular relevance include sincerity, empathy and countertransference (Minnillo, 2008); these and other possible aspects of authenticity discourse will be addressed in greater detail below.

In recognition of the ‘fragmented domains of knowledge specific to the construct’ and the lack of targeted research within psychotherapy, Minnillo (2008: 6) employed a grounded theory methodology to examine how therapists conceptualize authenticity. The aim was to provide an ‘indicative description of its [authenticity’s] place within the process and potential outcome of therapy’ (p.5). In doing so, Minnillo was interested to discover whether therapists understood authenticity as ‘an integral part of their authentic self or as a clinical procedure invoked at the therapist’s discretion’ (p.5). His research resulted in a ‘model of authentic meaning making’ (p.92), whereby personal values and characteristics interact with professional influences and experience, to counter barriers and increase therapeutic skill over time, the conclusion being that authentic interactions facilitate positive therapeutic outcome. Minnillo’s research is highly relevant to the present study and his findings will be addressed in more detail below (e.g. see discussion chapter); however, he states from the outset that authenticity is ‘operationalized within this study as being a transformational construct that facilitates positive outcome’ (p.26), and that his research is ‘based on the hypothesis that authenticity is a contributing factor in developing and strengthening the therapeutic alliance’ (p.27). As such, Minnillo’s research might be considered indicative of the ‘taken-for-granted’ value of ‘authenticity’. In contrast, the present study adopts a more critical perspective and seeks to explore how the language of authenticity may be used to achieve personal, social and political projects, i.e. in what ways authenticity discourse may function to create and enact different identities and activities.

For the purposes of this research, a systematic review of the literature was undertaken via PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO and SciVerse Science Direct, using the search terms ‘authentic’, ‘authenticity’, ‘counselling’, and ‘therapy’. The search indicated that no previous discourse analytic studies exist regarding authenticity in counselling or psychotherapy.

3.3 Counselling psychology

This section begins with a brief historical account of counselling psychology. Whilst it is acknowledged that such a ‘history’ presents just one of many possible constructions (Burr, 1995), it is hoped that the account is of sufficient richness to contextualise the research interest. It is followed by an exploration of the major tensions inherent to counselling psychology, these being indicative of current dominant discourses within the field.

3.3.1 A brief history of counselling psychology

Counselling psychology has a comparatively short history as a distinct domain of applied psychology, only attaining divisional status within the British Psychological Society (BPS) as recently as 1994 (BPS, 2010a). However, in order to appreciate the powerful nature of the conflicts within counselling psychology discourse, it is helpful to trace the backdrop against which the discipline emerged.

Until the late 19th century psychology was widely regarded as a branch of philosophy, however the Enlightenment brought a critical questioning of traditional institutions, customs and morals (Mandler, 2007). Medieval philosophy was replaced by an emphasis on reason and the belief that true knowledge could be discovered through objectively observed ‘facts’ verifiable against sense-experience (Erwin, 1999). The first psychological research laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt at the German University of Leipzig in 1879, and with the adoption of experimental methods, psychology began to gain recognition as a distinct field of study (Benjamin, 2007). Interest in consciousness and subjectivity waned as the evident success of the natural sciences encouraged psychologists to focus on that which was testable and measureable. In Britain

and the USA in particular, psychology came to be defined as a behavioural science and a positivist-empiricist philosophy was embraced. Behaviourism was set to dominate until the ‘cognitive revolution’ of the 1960’s, which led to a renewed interest in mental process, albeit still within a modernist framework (Hergenhahn, 2009).

While empiricism characterised the field of psychology, interest in consciousness and subjectivity continued to flourish in Continental Europe, within the frameworks of phenomenology and existential philosophy. Humanism also emerged as a cultural force in 1940’s America, placing the individual at the centre of social phenomena and claiming that the self was stable and knowable (Jenkins, 2001). Humanistic thinkers such as Maslow (1943,1966), May (1969) and Rogers (1951,1961) argued that in trying to measure human experience it was being stripped of all meaning and relevance to lived existence. They advocated the integration of humanistic values into psychology and sought a re-engagement with subjective experience, values and beliefs (Hergenhahn, 2009). Humanism gained momentum within Britain in the 1960’s, alongside a revival of the phenomenological tradition, and both were key influences on the emergence of counselling psychology in the 1980’s (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010).

Counselling psychologists sought to define their new discipline as an alternative to mainstream approaches. They challenged the determinism perceived within behaviourism, psychoanalysis and the medical model, emphasising the significance of the therapeutic relationship and the facilitation of well-being, rather than the treatment of ‘sickness’ (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Humanism thus offered an attractive ideological framework that allowed clients to be understood in terms of their subjective, lived experiences, rather than diagnosed and pathologised. There was also an increasing body of research which

suggested that the principal effects of psychotherapy were a result of the quality of the therapeutic relationship, rather than a particular brand of therapy (for a review see Norcross, 2002). This interest in the ‘common factors’ of therapy provided a strong rationale for prioritising the core conditions of ‘empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard’ as suggested by Rogers (1957). Phenomenology and existentialism further supported an emphasis on the relationship as they offered an understanding of people as unique yet fundamentally inter-twined with others in the world (Spinelli, 2005).

The 1980’s and 1990’s also saw the beginning of postmodern ideas having a significant influence upon different counselling orientations (Sexton & Griffin, 1997). Social constructionist and poststructuralist theories were more widely taken up and the ‘turn to discourse’ (see methodology chapter) prompted a radical review of language as ‘productive rather than (merely) reflective’ (Edley, 2001a: 435). Psychotherapeutic theories, whether psychoanalytic, humanistic or otherwise, had traditionally been offered as accurate reflections of that which they sought to describe (Corsini & Wedding, 2000; Speed, 1991), but postmodernism challenged the notion that a knowable reality exists, positing instead that ‘reality’ is always a human construction that cannot be objectively discovered. Such thinking complements the non-pathologising ethos of counselling psychology, for if the discovery of objective truth is no longer the goal of therapy, clients and counsellors are free to renarrate a client's life in any way that is helpful (Hansen, 2002). Counselling psychology is arguably postmodern in its refusal to align itself with a single therapeutic model or epistemology (Milton, 2010). Indeed it has embraced a diverse range of therapeutic approaches, ranging from the person-centred, cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic, to the constructionist, narrative and systemic, whilst always claiming ‘a firm value base grounded in the primacy of

the counselling or psychotherapeutic relationship' (British Psychological Society, 2005).

The above account provides just one possible version of psychology's history and it is likely that the development of counselling psychology has been far less linear than this short construction suggests. It is also important to acknowledge the existence of political and economic influences. Rose's (1979) seminal study is relevant for it provides a sociological analysis of the emergence of what he coined the 'psy-complex' (1985, 1989); this being the 'network of theories and practices concerned with psychological governance and self-reflection in Western culture' (Parker, 1998: 68). He proposed that the formation of psychology occurred as part of a state-led campaign of socialisation, whereby evolutionism and eugenic concerns about the mental deficiency, criminality and pauperism of the lower classes, created a political desire for instruments and techniques of mental measurement. Therefore, as Richards (2002: 38) notes, 'the appeal of psychological expertise lay in its promise that those possessing it would be able to more effectively manage the populations under their control', with applications ranging from the understanding of attention and motivation so as to improve industrial efficiency, to the creation of a diagnostic system in order to deal with pathology.

Such arguments link to the work of Foucault (e.g. 1971, 1977, 1986), who proposed that modern societies are managed not by overt force but by the self-disciplined practices of the population, and that psychology developed as part of the increasing disciplinary surveillance of populations in the West, brought about as a result of urbanization and growing secularism. Foucault warned that not only had the mind become the target of professional knowledge for reasons of social control by the state (1977), but that confessional modes of subjectivity have developed so that people will do the work of surveillance themselves

(1981). From this perspective, counselling psychology and psychotherapy are forms of ‘psy-work’ that construct selfhood, experience and understanding, whilst working up and regulating power relations (Hook, 2007).

3.3.2 Epistemological and ontological conflicts:

‘Epistemology’ refers to the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge; it addresses questions about what can be known and how (Willig, 2008), whereas ‘ontology’ is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of being and reality (Ponterotto, 2005). As a field of interest, counselling psychology encompasses a number of conflicting epistemological and ontological positions, an examination of which highlights the impossibility of theorizing about authenticity from within a single meta-narrative.

Counselling psychology is sometimes defined in terms of its humanistic value base, ‘that it is, in its essence, the application of those values’ (Cooper, 2009: 2); however, it is arguable that counselling psychology is also embedded within an empiricist framework, thus indicating an epistemological clash between phenomenology and positivism. For example, Pugh & Coyle (2000) analysed how counselling psychologists discursively constructed their profession within the Counselling Psychology Review in 1990 and 1996. They found a concern for establishing a unique identity but also a desire for legitimization. This translated into the use of ‘empiricist discourse to lend weight and respectability to the argument being constructed’ (p.92) and ‘differences in therapeutic approach and outcome across the therapeutic professions being minimized’ (p.97). They concluded that although differences in research methods were emphasized (i.e. the use of a human science/qualitative approach), similarities to established professions were also highlighted in order to promote acceptability

and gain status. Counselling psychology is now much more established than it was in the 1990's, however the relatively recent requirement (since 2005) that trainees undertake doctoral level research suggests a continued desire to compete for such professional recognition.

Counselling psychology training is commonly designed to encourage the student to become both a 'scientist-practitioner' and a 'reflective practitioner' (Martin, 2010; Schön, 1983). However in order to achieve both aspects of such an identity, the trainee must negotiate between a largely logical-empiricist knowledge base and a phenomenological perspective on practice (Williams & Irving, 1996). Whereas some see this mix as a strength which allows for the valuing of artistry in professional work (e.g. Strawbridge, 2003), others such as Williams & Irving (1996) argue that it presents a 'conflation of paradigms' and is in effect 'a logical absurdity' (p.6).

While it can be argued that counselling psychologists are caught between the values of empiricism and humanism (Spinelli, 2001), for those working within such settings as the UK National Health Service or Employee Assistant Programmes, there may be a particular pressure to conform to the natural science model. For example, in recent years political and economic pressures have encouraged a bias towards cognitive-behavioural therapy and solution focused work, whereas pressure for accountability has further increased the demand for evidence-based practice, encouraging the use of 'diagnostic' categories for deciding upon 'treatment' and obtaining outcomes measurement (Cohen, 2008). Medicalized psychological discourse also maintains a powerful presence, as illustrated by the common usage of terms such as 'mental illness' and 'mental health treatment'. Such phrases pathologise the experience of distress by treating human suffering as if it were a specific disease entity to be

diagnosed, categorised and remedied. This clearly conflicts with the phenomenological perspective counselling psychology originally espoused, whereby the description of conscious experience is valued, without reference to whether it is objectively real (Spinelli, 2005).

A variety of postmodern perspectives provide further room for epistemological conflict. For example, Burr (1995) notes that social constructionism is different from traditional positivistic psychology because it is anti-essentialist (i.e. there are no innate discoverable psychological essences such as ‘personality’) and anti-realist (i.e. all ‘reality’ is socially constructed). However, the ontological differences between humanist and postmodern perspectives have particularly significant implications for authenticity and the notion of an authentic self; for while humanism proposes that the individual has an essential core that might be actualized (see below), postmodernism suggests that the self is continually constructed as a function of social interaction (McNamee, 1996). Indeed sceptical forms of postmodernism dismiss the self altogether and while more affirmative varieties retain a notion of self, its multiple or fluid form is radically different to the consolidated humanist version (Hansen, 2005).

It has been said that postmodernism ‘attacks the ‘modernist’ ego-centric/person-centred approaches of much of psychoanalysis, counselling, psychotherapy and psychology’ (Loewenthal & Snell, 2003: 1) and it certainly raises questions about the humanistic ideal of a consolidated, congruent self as a goal of counselling (Gergen, 1995; McNamee, 1996). For example, a postmodern critique suggests that counsellors need not assume that the client has an authentic, essential self lying beneath their various social masks; instead relational and cultural factors are understood to shape the construction of self, meaning that ‘multiple identities become the norm rather than a sign of psychopathology’ (Hansen, 2005: 7).

Such ideas stand in opposition to the dominant discourse of the self in Western society (Wolputte, 2004), which pathologizes the notion of multiple selves via the application of labels such as schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder. However, ethnographic research has identified cultures where having a multiple self is actively promoted (e.g. Cohen, 1998; Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987), and rather than being problematic, Gergen (1991) argues that multiple selves are necessary for successful adaption to the numerous role demands of contemporary society. Therefore from a postmodern perspective, the ‘humanistic self... is exposed as an arbitrary, and perhaps even maladaptive, ideal’ (Hansen, 2005: 10).

In recent years postmodernism has influenced a move away from the one-person psychology of the more traditional therapeutic approaches, towards a two-person psychology, in which intersubjectivity and the co-creation of narrative is valued (Rizq, 2008); however, the notion of a core self has been described as one of the ‘sacred cows’ of modern psychology (Hoffman, 1993) and it maintains a powerful discursive presence. Modernist notions of self are also likely to be reinforced by daily ‘reality’, i.e. people generally experience themselves as integrated, intentional beings, and as Cushman (1990: 559) explains, ‘the self is a difficult concept on which to get a perspective precisely because it is such a central aspect of the horizon’. It has been argued that even psychotherapists who espouse philosophical or theoretical positions that reject notions of objective ‘truth’ inevitably revert to realism once engaged in actual interaction with clients (Downing, 2000; Held, 1995). Despite these difficulties, it seems important to question the values that might inform the common therapeutic projects of ‘self-discovery’ and ‘self-development’ and it is clear from the epistemological and ontological conflicts outlined above, that there will be more than one way of answering.

3.4 ‘Authenticity’

As Starks & Trinidad (2007: 1374) note, discourse analysis involves ‘tracing the historical evolution of language practices and examining how language both shapes and reflects dynamic cultural, social and political practices’. This section therefore provides a brief genealogical account of the concept of authenticity, before focusing in more detail upon its place within existential philosophy.

3.4.1 A genealogical account of ‘authenticity’

The concept of ‘authenticity’ has a surprisingly short and rich history (Degenhardt, 2010), traceable from its growth in importance in the 18th century, through significant transformation in the 19th century, to its current status as a cultural ideal (Guigon, 2004; Taylor, 1991). The following genealogy seeks to identify the ‘conditions of possibility’ (Foucault, 1980) which have enabled people to speak of authenticity in different ways.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines authenticity as ‘the quality of being real or true’ (2009: 97). Such definitions are often accompanied by examples referring to the genuineness of documents or works of art, presupposing the existence of an original item that makes possible a copy or forgery (Golomb, 1995). Lindholm (2008: 2) observes that by extension, individual authenticity is generally understood in terms of whether a person is ‘true to their roots or if their lives are a direct and immediate expression of their essence’. However, Potter (2010) suggests that whilst the distinction between how something seems and what it actually is has long been a topic of human fascination, to measure or evaluate a person in terms of their ‘authenticity’ is a thoroughly modern and problematic endeavour.

Potter (2010) notes that the notion of authenticity is often used to link the Socratic injunction ‘know thyself’ with the modern dictum ‘to thine own self be true’, however he argues that such a claim of continuity is an anachronism. He reasons that Socrates lived in an age when the world was thought of as an ordered ‘cosmos’, where to know yourself was to understand your place in the world, whereas the notion of authenticity requires a distinction between an inner true self and an outer self that has only been evident in Western culture since the 18th century. This suggests that the concept of authenticity might more appropriately be linked to the rise of individualism and the notion of personal identity.

Cushman (1990: 600) proposes that the demise of feudalism across Europe in the 15th century led to the construction of an ‘increasingly bounded, masterful self’, as urbanization brought a new awareness of ‘internal space’ and a growing focus on privacy and personal identity. With the emergence of the centralized state, the 16th century Protestant Reformation then established a religious tradition that directed individuals to look inward and make contact with an inner truth (God within) so that guidance might be received. Authenticity might thus be said to originate in the Protestant belief that full being and salvation can only be achieved by examining one’s conscience (Guigon, 2004; Potter, 2010). As Taylor (1991: 26) observes, the Reformation ‘is part of the massive subjective turn of modern culture, a new form of inwardness, in which we come to think of ourselves as beings with inner depths’.

According to Trilling (1971), the term authenticity entered common usage in the 18th century, having grown out of the simpler concept of sincerity. Trilling defines sincerity as ‘a congruence between avowal and actual feeling’ (p.2) and suggests that it emerged as people

increasingly lived amongst strangers (encouraging the potential for deceit). Sincerity was also encouraged by the egalitarian ethic of Protestantism, which led people to wear plain clothing and shun adornment in order to appear 'as they really were' (Lindholm, 2008). However sincerity is problematic in terms of how a person might ensure that their self-interpretation is not self-delusion. Therefore as the industrial revolution progressed and people began to experience increasing alienation and self-fragmentation, sincerity was eclipsed by the notion of authenticity. Trilling defines authenticity as a state in which the individual's essential being is in alignment with their sentiments, it being 'a more exigent conception of the self and of what being true to it consists in, a wider reference to the universe and man's place in it' (p.12).

The notion of authenticity builds upon early forms of individualism, such as Descartes' pursuit of disengaged rationality (Lindholm, 2008), however it is also strongly rooted in the Romantic period and the works of both Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Johann Herder (1744-1803). Rousseau proposed that civilization had deformed the true nature of humanity, making people slaves to appearance and competition; hence his famous statement that 'man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains' (Rousseau, 1998: 5). He argued for an egalitarian society ruled by the general will of the people, whilst also idealizing introspection and the experience of one's deepest emotions. This emphasis on self-contact was further encouraged by Herder, who argued that each person has an original way of being human which they are called upon to embrace. Herder's ideas gave importance to the idea of being true to oneself because they suggested that a failure to do so would result in missing the point of one's life (Taylor, 1991). The Romantic period therefore established two key strands of authenticity discourse: firstly the notion of a true inner self (at this point still perceived as

divinely gifted) and secondly the idea that to live authentically requires an ongoing filtering of experience through deeply felt emotion.

As the Industrial Revolution progressed, so the concept of authenticity grew in cultural force. The opportunities of a capitalistic wage labour market meant that occupation and identity were no longer determined by heredity, whilst the new ideal of spiritual equality implied that subservient work was not a calling from God but an imposition of power. Thus the Enlightenment encouraged a belief in a sacred authentic self, existing beneath the social framework. However, Richards (2002) argues that people were unsure of what their ‘true’ identities might be and in the spirit of Victorian rationality they desired a ‘scientific’ voice to guide them. The result was an increasing involvement by psychiatry and psychology in defining and creating modes of subjectivity, eventually leading to the emergence of general personality theories such as Jung’s (1921) *Psychological Types*.

Fuelled by the increased compartmentalization of work and the fragmentation of local communities, the Victorians conceived of a ‘deep, secret, instinct-driven, potentially dangerous self’, which Cushman (1990: 600) suggests was ‘used by the state to justify its role as official controller of selves’. However, over the course of the 20th century and as a result of both world wars, economic forces caused the mechanisms of social control to shift from the restriction of impulse to the creation and manipulation of a need for continual consumption (Cushman, 1990). The discourse of authenticity similarly shifted from a concern with striving to become a better person (with divine help), to the project of discovering and reclaiming a self that already existed; this to be achieved via the purchase of authentic experiences, lifestyles and objects, soon obsolete. Potter (2010) proposes that the search for authenticity in

contemporary society has become a status-seeking game, with people competing against each other to be more authentic and live more authentic lives.

Guigon (2004) links the commodification of authenticity with the demise of religion and a subsequent loss of tradition and shared meaning. He suggests that as Western society became increasingly secularized, the notion of an external source of direction was lost and ‘God-within’ became thought of as ‘God being me’. However, the importance attributed to knowing one’s ‘own self’ and seeking direction from within, met with the difficulties of assuming that a core, pre-existent self exists. Guigon proposes that such problems have driven the creation of a thriving self-help industry and explain the popularity of therapy today.

Russell (1999) also argues that counselling discourse is closely and powerfully related to the social construction of self in the West. She notes that the development and use of counselling as a form of social practice has occurred concomitantly with the development and emergence of modernist notions of self, with high value being placed upon the concepts of autonomy and authenticity. She cautions:

‘the propagation of these notions within selfhood may have some derogative consequences to social relations, within communities and within society. It is suggested that counsellors need to develop much more awareness of the sociological perspectives of their profession before enthusiastically propagating the authentic, autonomous self’ (p.339).

However, as will be argued below (see psychotherapeutic theory section), individualist notions of authentic selfhood continue to inform many mainstream therapeutic approaches.

One possible implication is that clients will be diagnosed as having a false or fragmented self, without sufficient attention being given to the socio-historical context of the presenting problem or cause of the fragmentation. Indeed Cushman (1990) argues that when psychotherapy attempts to heal the modern self it usually does so by 'reinforcing the very qualities of self that have initially caused the problem: its autonomous, bounded, masterful nature' (p.601).

In today's 'post-modern world' it might be expected that notions of authentic self-hood would weaken. For example, Richards (2002) notes that later 20th century generations are more accustomed to rapid change than their earlier counterparts, thus rendering the possibility of identity change more acceptable. Furthermore, factors such as increased globalization may make it more likely that such changes will occur. Indeed Jameson (1991: 26) argues that the alienation brought about by late capitalism has resulted in a 'schizophrenic self' characterized by information overload and the absence of an overarching narrative. However, Wolputte (2004) suggests that this results in a fundamental paradox whereby the greater the recognition of fragmentation and decentralization, the greater the assertion of hegemony and emphasis on the ideology that denies fragmentation. Not only does the desire for a central, defragmented self remain, but it is reinforced by a political discourse which seeks to represent the individual as indivisible.

Although it is possible that an 'authentic-self' repertoire may dominate authenticity discourse, it is important to note that a range of different authenticity constructions are available and continue to clash with each other. It is possible that the above account conveys too linear a progression, for the concept of authenticity has emerged both slowly and

unevenly. Existential philosophy in particular has approached the notion of authenticity differently and this will be explored in further detail below.

3.4.2 'Authenticity' and existential philosophy

Existential thinkers have raised many questions regarding the nature of authenticity and whether it is possible or even desirable to achieve. Indeed Golomb (1995: 5) argues that 'the philosophical understanding of 'authenticity' is far more complex than its everyday use suggests'. Existentialism was also an important influence upon the development of counselling psychology and practitioners may draw upon it when constructing the notion of authenticity for themselves.

Yalom (1980) traces modern existentialism to the writings of the nineteenth century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), and Earnshaw (2006: 3) suggests that it was Kierkegaard who first 'introduced the idea of authenticity and the idea of an authentic self for which we alone are responsible'. Much of Kierkegaard's work was concerned with questioning the individual's relationship to God and it is here that his concept of authenticity is located; therefore his ideas might also be considered indicative of a spiritual discourse of authenticity.

Kierkegaard proposed there are three hierarchical existence spheres or stages of self-actualisation: the aesthetic, ethical and religious (Kierkegaard, 1959). In the aesthetic stage a person is concerned with only the sensual, emotive and immediate; however, there comes the realization that such a life is unfulfilling. This leads to the ethical stage (the 'universal'), which involves an acceptance of the significance of moral choice and social responsibility. Both stages are characterised by inauthenticity because the individual is essentially

conforming to society, albeit in different ways. Anxiety (angst) is then experienced as a natural consequence of the growing awareness of possibility (freedom), i.e. that nothing is certain and that life is founded on choices which in turn are based only on the values that the individual has aligned themselves with. The struggle with meaninglessness creates despair, through which the individual becomes aware of their existence before God and experiences dread. Therefore in the religious stage, Kierkegaard invites the individual to commit a leap of faith and enter into a relationship with God. He proposed that only then is it possible to experience authentic being, balancing such tensions as the necessity of finitude with the possibility of infinitude (Van Deurzen & Kenward, 2005; Earnshaw, 2006).

For Kierkegaard, authenticity is part of an ongoing process of taking responsibility and renewing one's spiritual relationship every day. In this sense he viewed the self as always being a potential rather than a fixed entity, with authenticity as an open ended aim (Golomb, 1995). However, many later existentialists viewed authenticity as even more difficult to achieve than this, and in his overview of Existentialism, Earnshaw (2006: 124) concludes that 'the struggle for authenticity is ultimately fruitless, unless it is conceived within the framework of a 'leap of faith'. For example, in contrast to Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) believed the universe to be meaningless and chaotic, hence his famous dictum: 'God is dead'. He therefore argued that authenticity might only be achieved by an *Übermensch* (an 'overman' or 'superman'); this being an ideal person with a 'will to power'; someone unafraid to face up to the fundamental anxieties of living and able to accept reality for what it is (Thompson, 2005).

Spinelli (2005) suggests that the work of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) may be particularly relevant to discussions about therapy, as both writers

developed an inter-relational understanding of what it means to be human. For example, Heidegger argued that human existence is always a 'Being-in-the-world-with-Others' and Sartre proposed that awareness of 'Others' forms part of the structure of consciousness. Each was greatly influenced by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and his method of phenomenology (Spinelli, 2005).

Heidegger has been credited as the first to make authenticity 'the backbone of his philosophical perspective' (Thompson, 2005: 144). He was interested in the ontological structures which constitute how each 'Dasein' exists in relation to the world; 'Dasein' representing the kind of Being that belongs to people, literally translated as 'Being-there' (see Wrathall, 2005). According to Heidegger, Dasein is 'thrown', meaning that although people have no choice regarding the 'facticity' of their existence (gender, culture etc), they must still decide who to be. This choice creates anxiety, which the individual attempts to mitigate by complying with others (having a 'they-self'). This 'falling' into inauthenticity allows them to turn away from their responsibility.

As with Kierkegaard, Heidegger proposed that the inauthentic person experiences an underlying disquiet and eventually discovers that their compliance is unrewarding; however, to be one's own person requires an anxiety provoking acknowledgment of both one's freedom and finitude. To some extent, everyday social life also demands inauthenticity, whereby routinized patterns of communication and reaction override the freedom to speak openly (Groth, 2008). Therefore to live authentically is no easy task and Dasein is 'proximally and for the most part' fallen (Heidegger, 1962: 220).

For Heidegger there is no vision of an authentic hero (as for Nietzsche); instead authenticity may be found in a specific act or moment where the context of a situation has allowed the individual to choose to behave authentically (Thompson, 2005). However when a person acknowledges their own death, it 'liberates him from possibilities which count for nothing, and lets him become free for those which are authentic' (Heidegger, 1962: 395). In other words, the resolve to live authentically may be strengthened by an acceptance of one's mortality and the recognition 'that shared conventions or norms will ultimately fail us' (Wrathall, 2005: 69-70). While this does not change that Dasein is always a 'Being-in-the-world-with-Others', it may allow for a more authentic mode of relationship (Heidegger, 1962).

Heidegger's theory introduces several interesting new facets of authenticity discourse, including the above outlined notion of accepting one's death in order to live freely. Of particular note is Heidegger's argument that inauthenticity is 'as much an ontological structure of Dasein as the possibility of authenticity' (Garza, 2006: 255). This idea stands in contrast to the work of previous philosophers and Golomb (1995) suggests that it may offer a more balanced and empathic view. It also has implications for the goals of therapy, for if inauthenticity is understood to be part of the ontological structure of human being, then it may be inappropriate to prescribe a code of ethics to it.

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) was arguably one of authenticity's most influential proponents; however he was also 'deeply pessimistic about its viability' (Golomb, 1995: 128). Of central importance to his work is the idea that 'existence precedes essence' (Sartre, 1973: 27), which holds that both the world and the self are constituted via intentional acts of consciousness. Anything considered to be a part of consciousness is really an object which

consciousness directs itself towards, including the ego. Consciousness is Being; ‘a being, the nature of which is to question its own being, that being implying a being other than itself’ (Sartre, 1943: 86). This means that for Sartre ‘there is no entity that is an original, authentic self or ego’ (Golomb, 1995: 132) and there can be no self-referential ‘ownness’ as for Heidegger. If ‘consciousness is intentional activity directed at what is not itself’ (Golomb, 1995: 133) then authenticity is not something found within, instead it is expressed via ‘the created products of consciousness – it is the creative process itself’ (Golomb, 1995: 132).

To live in ‘good faith’ requires the individual to face the ‘nothingness’ of his or her being and embrace their freedom, accepting full responsibility for their actions; however, facing this freedom creates a sense of ‘nausea’; an anxiety that can be sufficiently unpleasant to lead to inauthenticity instead (Quinn, 2010). To live in ‘bad faith’ is to flee from one’s freedom by construing oneself as a ‘thing’; as a ‘Being-in-itself’ rather than a ‘Being-for-itself’, and to deny that as human agents we must define and redefine ourselves through our choices (Mills, 2003). There are similarities here with Heidegger’s notion of ‘fallenness’; however, the terms ‘good-faith’ and ‘bad-faith’ are not synonymous with authenticity and inauthenticity, since they are also used to signify how a person approaches the ontological difficulties that ultimately make ‘authenticity an unattainable ideal’ (Golomb, 1995: 129).

The central dilemma of authenticity is that whilst it may be necessary to reflect on one’s consciousness if one is to live in ‘good-faith’, the ‘me’ that makes authenticity possible is the product of reflection and therefore inauthentic. All states, even authentic states transcend consciousness and are open to doubt. Plus to regard the ‘I’ as having any rigid features beyond the instantaneous moment is an act of bad-faith. ‘Bad faith is thus inherent in

the epistemological features of consciousness' (Golomb, 1995: 135). For Sartre, the solution to these difficulties is to strive for authenticity not as essence but as freedom. He turned his focus towards political action, arguing that whilst authenticity rooted in the ontology of 'human reality' cannot be attained, the impulse to act in bad faith might be subdued in appropriate social frameworks (Golomb, 1995).

Space restrictions prevent further exploration of relevant existential thought (e.g. see Buber, 2004 or Camus, 1982); however, whilst the above account provides only a selective summary of relevant theory, it is clear that existential philosophy is a rich resource for authenticity discourse. Not only does it link in such existential themes as death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness (Yalom, 1980), but it offers a range of alternative positions from which to speak of authenticity. For example, it negates the culturally dominant discourse of authenticity as the expression of a pre-existing inner self, offering instead a view of authenticity as a lived process and an ongoing commitment to self-creation. To some extent it also challenges the negativity attributed to inauthenticity, suggesting that such a mode of living may be an inevitable aspect of what it is to be human.

3.5 Counselling psychology training and regulation

Being part of a critical-realist study, this review recognises that institutional power may act as a material influence upon authenticity discourse (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). This section therefore aims to explore how the professional socialisation of counselling psychology trainees may lead them to appropriate particular ways-of-being in relation to authenticity. It then addresses the increasing professionalisation of counselling psychology as a whole.

3.5.1 Professional socialisation and 'authenticity'

Although each counselling psychology training institution may emphasize a different approach to therapy (be it relational, existential, cognitive-behavioural etc), they are all embedded within the shared cultural and historical context outlined above, whilst also being subject to the increasing professionalisation and regulation of the discipline (see below). Therefore while it is acknowledged that differences in theoretical emphasis will result in a variety of stances regarding the value of authenticity, it is arguable that all trainees in the UK are exposed to a generic process of professional socialisation which merits attention.

According to Du Toit (1995: 164) professional socialisation 'is essentially an acculturation process during which the values, norms and symbols of the profession are internalized', thus transforming the novice into a professional. While some have likened it to a process of indoctrination during which the student is moulded into a 'good' professional (Sparkes, 2002), others have argued for a greater distinction to be made between compliance and true conformity (Abrams, 1992). Clouder (2003: 220) suggests that although there is scope for individuals to exercise personal agency, 'the importance of regulation and control within a profession cannot be underestimated' and newcomers who choose not to subscribe to the values of their profession are likely to be excluded. Professional socialisation is therefore relevant to the discussion of authenticity because it suggests that although there is room for resistance, counselling psychologists are likely to adopt the discourse and values most consistently upheld by their profession.

Many of those who are accused of abuse or exploitation might be said to have followed their 'authentic' desires (Pope & Tabachnick, 1993) therefore it is arguable that training courses impose an 'inauthentic' framework (i.e. a set of external values) in order to

promote ethical client work, a kind of conversion to professionalism. Alternatively it could be argued that the majority of individuals drawn to undertake counselling psychology training already share the humanistic values that the profession promotes. Either way, having such values it is likely that counselling psychologists will strive both to develop ‘authenticity’ within the therapeutic alliance and to increase the capacity for ‘authenticity’ within their clients.

Counselling psychology training places great emphasis on the student developing a ‘high level of self-awareness’ (BPS, 2011a), with a minimum of forty hours of personal therapy mandatorily prescribed. Research suggests that this therapy is ‘valued as a vehicle for... [practitioners] to establish authentic emotional contact with themselves and their clients’ (Rizq & Target, 2008: 29). However whilst it may increase the capacity for self-reflexivity, such therapy also acts as a vehicle for further socialisation, e.g. with the trainee viewing the therapist as a professional role-model (Grimmer & Tribe, 2001). The compulsory nature of the therapy also suggests a confessional culture (Taylor, 2003), whereby self-reflection functions as a disciplinary practice and a discourse of expressing the ‘real’ legitimizes professional activity.

Research suggests that training to be a therapist is a stressful experience which leads to changes in identity and self-knowledge (e.g. Bischoff et al., 2002; Howard et al., 2006). A modernist understanding of professional socialisation suggests that these changes may involve the development of an inauthentic self, i.e. the process of professional socialisation dictates a particular way of ‘being a therapist’ that is gradually internalized. Conversely, a postmodern or social constructionist view of the self would counter that the professional self is just one of many equally valid possibilities and thus no less authentic than any other self that the

individual develops. Whichever ontological position is adopted it would appear that ‘students very selves are subtly modelled around what the profession demands of its members’ (Clouder, 2003: 220).

It is possible that a trainee’s initial attempts to act as a counselling psychologist may evoke a sense of being inauthentic with clients. Paradoxically, only once the new identity has been taken up and they can ‘be in role’ more easily, might trainees feel themselves more confident and ‘authentic’ again. At the other end of the professional scale, anecdotal evidence suggests that experienced therapists will sometimes defy aspects of their chosen modalities or professional framework in order to ‘be more themselves’ and become more authentic. However postmodernism leads to the consideration that this too may be a ‘script’, or in discursive terms simply another subject position. For those who may report feeling increasingly little or no conflict between their ‘everyday self’ and their ‘professional self’ it might be argued that socialisation has been successful.

3.5.2 The professionalisation of counselling psychology

Lunt (1999) suggests that psychology in general has become increasingly professionalized across Europe, citing lengthier requirements for education and training, greater specialization, pressures for regulation and laws, the development of ethical codes, and increased institutionalization. Each of these factors might also be applied to British counselling psychology. Taking education as an example, the requirements for UK counselling psychologists have steadily increased to the current level of a doctorate and training now takes on average seven years to complete (BPS, 2011b). Furthermore, in order to gain a place on a BPS accredited doctoral programme (necessary for later professional registration with the Health Professions Council), trainees must first obtain a degree in psychology which

meets the BPS 'graduate basis for chartered membership' (or undertake a BPS conversion course). These restrictions indicate professionalisation in several ways, including high levels of regulation and institutionalization.

The BPS is recognised as the representative body for counselling (and other specialist) psychologists within the UK, having been awarded a Royal Charter in 1965 giving it 'responsibility for the development, promotion and application of pure and applied psychology for the public good' (BPS, 2010b). The charter functions as a symbol of state approval and by using such language as 'for the public good' the BPS is positioned as a benign yet powerful authority. The BPS recognised counselling psychology as a Section in 1982, before making it a Special Group in 1989 and eventually a Division in 1994. The evolving status of counselling psychology within the BPS is another key indicator of its increased professionalisation.

Finally, it is of note that 2009 saw the introduction of state regulation for counselling psychologists via the UK Health Professions Council. The transfer of practitioner registration and disciplinary power from the BPS to the state is entirely in keeping with the professionalisation of therapy as outlined by Parker (2002), which suggests that state regulation further legitimizes the activities of a profession. For the many psychologists who work in the NHS, state regulation may also shape their practice via the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme, National Institute for Clinical Health guidelines and Skills for Health competencies. It appears that counselling psychology is subject to high levels of state observation and control.

The professionalisation of counselling psychology has a number of implications for ‘authenticity’ in therapy, particularly with regard to the positioning of the therapist as an ‘expert’. For example, post-graduate training and other such symbols of expertise convey that the psychologist possesses specialized knowledge of the human condition that clients do not, potentially leading the therapist to impose their own moral vision or a normative discourse on the client (Downing, 2004). Parker (2002: 342) similarly argues that an individual who has taken up the identity of therapist by virtue of a lengthy professional training may equate therapeutic learning with an educational process and thus ‘may turn the therapy itself into machinery for manufacturing others like themselves’. Such consequences are clearly antithetical to the notion of inwardly generated authenticity and this raises the question of how counselling psychologists might negotiate their identity in terms of both expertise and authenticity.

Whilst the notion of ‘expertise’ opens the way for an abuse of power (Hansen, 2006), it may also function as a ‘container’ for anxiety by encouraging hope or a belief in the value of therapeutic assistance. By taking up the role of ‘expert’, the therapist is armed with the certainty of therapeutic truth-claims and immediately afforded more protection from the demands and doubts of both the client and themselves. Support for this argument can be found in the work of Menzies (1960) who made ‘the original proposition that work in health and social care organizations entails significant anxieties for staff and that defences against this anxiety are part of organizational life’ (cited in Lawlor, 2009: 524). Furthermore it is possible that counselling psychologists may experience particularly high levels of such doubts and anxieties because their theoretical foundation is so ontologically and epistemologically conflicted. If authenticity is constructed in terms of honesty, transparency, equality and so forth, with the therapist taking a more vulnerable position, expertise might similarly be

understood as a defence against the anxieties of authentic meeting. However, such a function of expertise could well be hidden via the socialisation process outlined above, whereby the therapist may somewhat paradoxically develop an identity as one who is ‘authentic’, or as an ‘expert’ in authentic relating. Of course this is not to suggest that therapists are fixed within the subject position of ‘expert’ and never engage ‘authentically’, it merely highlights a possible conflict. It is also arguable that professionalism and expertise are concepts which regulate therapist behaviour in accordance with important socially prescribed standards of ethics (as noted above) and thus prevent ‘authentic’ acts of abuse.

Further implications of professionalisation for authenticity discourse include how the notions of ‘science’ and ‘evidence-based’ practice (i.e. those favoured by the bodies that regulate training and fund employment) may influence the ways in which the therapeutic encounter is conceptualized. For example, medicalized discourse seeks to divide normality from abnormality by locating the cause of any deviation from socially desired standards deep within the individual subject (Parker, 2002). Therefore a medicalized discourse may encourage talk of authenticity in terms of the ‘authentic self’ needing to be discovered. Perhaps of most concern is the implication that greater professionalisation leads to the exercise of increased institutional power, meaning that counselling psychologists may not be encouraged to question critically their professional values because to do so may be to challenge their potential role as agents of social regulation.

3.6 Counselling Psychology practice and ‘authenticity’

This section begins by exploring some of the different ways in which authenticity is constructed within psychotherapy, making particular reference to person-centred, psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural schools of thought. Consideration is then given to

the therapeutic relationship and related research. This is followed by a brief discussion regarding the ethics of ‘authenticity’ within counselling psychology practice.

3.6.1. Psychotherapeutic theory

The concept of authenticity is considered essential to understanding the human condition within a wide range of psychological traditions, these include the humanistic (e.g. Rogers, 1961), the existential (e.g. May, 1981; Yalom, 1980), the psychodynamic (e.g. Horney, 1951; Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1965), the developmental (e.g. Harter et al., 1996) and the social psychological (e.g. Kernis & Goldman, 2005; Lopez & Rice, 2006). As will be demonstrated, it appears that authenticity is largely conceived of as desirable and ‘good’, although the ease with which it is thought possible to attain varies.

Authenticity is arguably most visible as a value within person-centred counselling (Rogers, 1951/1961) for the humanist vision upon which the model is founded places great importance on ‘acting naturally and being authentic... the pursuit of a unique lifestyle and the continuous search for self-realization’ (Messer, 2003: 142). From this perspective, human nature is essentially good and ‘authenticity is a direct experience of the real self’ (Rowan, 2001: 44). As such, Tudor & Worrall (2006: 156) propose that for person-centred counsellors ‘authenticity is synonymous with congruence’, an observation that Rowan (2001) supports.

Congruence is characterised by genuineness and honesty, whereby the individual is aware of his/her inner experiencing (without denial or distortion) and outward communication consistently matches it (Merry, 2004; Tudor & Worrall, 2006). Being the expression of the real self, congruence is considered a key aspect of healthy psychological functioning. Rogers (1957) attributed great importance to it, identifying therapist congruence as one of six

conditions ‘necessary and sufficient’ for therapeutic change to occur. He also proposed that clients should be assisted to identify their ‘conditions of worth’ and reconnect with their ‘organismic valuing process’, so as to live more authentically.

Accepting a client’s choice to be inauthentic could be very challenging for a person-centred therapist seeking to uncover the ‘authentic being’ of their client (Worsley, 2002). This illustrates how congruence is an aspect of authenticity discourse which is distinct to that of existential philosophy. Indeed Van Deurzen & Kenward (2005: 40) propose that although both terms relate to truth, ‘congruence is concerned with psychological honesty... authenticity is about acceptance of the degree of one’s responsibility and power as well as of one’s inevitable existential limitations’. Golomb (1995: 10) goes further in his distinction, stating that authenticity and sincerity (which he equates with congruence) are ‘fundamentally opposed and should not be regarded as equivalent or synonymous’. For Golomb, to speak of congruence between an individual’s inner convictions and their outer behaviour is to presume a ‘static subject, while authenticity requires an incessant movement of becoming, self-transcendence and self-creation’ (p.9).

As Golomb’s argument may indicate, the individualism prized in humanism (and hence person-centred therapy) has significant implications for the concept of authenticity because of its modernist conception of ‘an isolationist divide between self and other’ (Spinelli 2005: 184). However, perhaps reflecting the influence of the postmodern, the most recent edition of Mearns and Thorne’s (2007) introductory textbook for person-centred counselling concedes that ‘Rogers’ theory in this area is consistent with the unitary emphasis of his time’, leading them to propose an alternative person-centred conceptualisation of the self as a range of ‘authentic configurations’ (p.36).

Psychoanalytic and psychodynamic therapies also contribute significantly to authenticity discourse, not least because psychoanalytic notions of self and psychotherapeutic self-work function as dominant forms of knowledge in Western culture (Parker, 1998). As with humanism, psychoanalytic theory posits an internal authenticity (i.e. the unconscious); however, this is less accessible and more dynamic than the inner self of person-centred counselling. Indeed psychoanalytic therapy envisions obstacles to authenticity which make any form of liberation / actualization far more difficult to achieve (Messer, 2003). Therefore whilst a person-centred therapist is likely to accept most client feelings as authentic expression, a psychoanalytic therapist is more likely to look for hidden meaning, contradiction or paradox, and acting ‘naturally’ may even be viewed as narcissism.

Authenticity itself is not a commonly used technical term in psychoanalytic theory; however, Thompson (2005: 144) argues that:

‘analytic patients and practitioners alike nevertheless allude to authenticity in the way they oftentimes characterize the goals of treatment and the demands that are made on both participants in the analyst-patient relationship’.

For example, it has been argued that Freud (e.g. 1997; 2002) conceived psychoanalysis as enabling the analysand to ‘tolerate being resigned with respect to the inevitability of who she *was* and *had to be* given her earlier life experiences’ (Groth, 2008: 82 - italics in original). In other words, the aim was for the client to develop sufficient inner strength to be honest with herself and live more authentically (with less need for neurotic defences), thus being able to cope better with the difficulties of everyday life.

A classical psychoanalytic view might also suggest that authenticity corresponds with expression of the 'id', whereas inauthenticity may result when action is based on what one 'ought' or 'should' do, in accordance with the promptings of the 'superego' (Lemma, 2003). The superego is understood to be inauthentic because it exists as an introjected morality, and whilst at times it may be necessary or beneficial to choose an inauthentic course of action, 'the analyst is concerned with those choices we make that are neurotic because the choices are predominantly unconscious' (Thompson, 2005: 154).

In terms of authenticity and the demands of psychoanalysis, the client may be expected to free-associate; speaking without censorship so as to give the analyst access to their (authentic) unconscious. For the therapist, the classical analytic stance is one of relative detachment, the aim being to provide a 'blank screen' upon which the analysand might project. This 'withholding' approach has been subject to much criticism (e.g. Kohut, 1977; Hoffman, 1983), and in writing of her experience as a client, Anna Sands (2000) describes such therapy as inauthentic and highly damaging. However, the relational psychodynamic models that counselling psychologists are more likely to adopt emphasise instead the intersubjective nature of the therapeutic encounter, whereby each person is understood to unavoidably influence the other. This perspective highlights the therapist's countertransference awareness (Gabbard, 2001) and has led Bader (1995) to argue that the therapist's authentic engagement is an essential component of therapy.

In line with post-modern thinking, psychoanalysis has experienced a move away from the one-person 'drive-defence-conflict' model, towards the various two-person 'developmental-deficit' models that counselling psychology has been able to embrace (Rizq, 2008). There has been a shift in focus from repression to the relational construction of the

authentic self (Bader, 1995). This change also appears to reflect the growing individualism outlined in the socio-historical account given above. Of the theorists who have focused on the development of the ‘true-self’, space restrictions dictate that only Winnicott (1965) will be addressed in further detail here; however, the writings of Kohut (1971), Stern (1985) and Fonagy et al. (2002) are all highly relevant.

Winnicott’s (1965/1971) relational theory centres ‘on ego defensive manoeuvres that arise in response to environmental demands’ (Mills, 2003: 123). He proposed that an infant needs its mother to recognise and reflect back what it initiates, allowing a world of shared reality to be constructed. In doing so, the infant also requires the mother to survive its destructiveness and provide a sufficient experience of omnipotence in order to build its ego. If the mother fails to provide ‘good enough mothering’ (i.e. fails to adapt sufficiently to the infant’s needs or responds in a retaliatory or rejecting way), then the infant has no choice but to comply with her demands. This enforced attentiveness to the needs of the mother creates a ‘false self’ organisation. The ‘false self’ for Winnicott is ‘a self that lives in the mind, in an intellectual register cut off from the living body of psychosomatic processes’ (Campbell, 2006: 4), whereas the ‘true self’ cannot be defined because it represents that which is original or idiosyncratic about a person, is primary rather than reactive and is bound up in bodily aliveness, leading to the feeling of being real (Winnicott, 1987). The ‘true-self’ is not a fixed or single self, however it is characterised by a creative originality which implies an innate authenticity (Phillips, 2007). Winnicott’s ideas may hold particular appeal to counselling psychologists because of the relational emphasis and correspondence with a humanistic approach to therapy (e.g. in terms of providing empathy, warmth, reflective listening/mirroring etc).

From a social constructionist point of view, the idea of an innate authenticity remains problematic and much psychoanalytic theory appears to be incompatible with a discursive perspective. However, Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, (2008: 94) observe that possibilities for ‘combining discourse with psychoanalysis were found in Lacan (1966) whose work presupposes a decentred and divided subject’. According to Lacan, the ego is always an inauthentic agency, functioning to conceal a disturbing lack of unity, and notions of authenticity merely reflect the individual’s positioning within discourse.

Cognitive-behavioural therapies (CBT) tend to epitomize a modernist epistemology within which problems are operationally defined and practical solutions sought. These approaches are generally interested in the direct alleviation of distress and a rapidly achieved positive outcome, rather than reflective self-exploration (Messer, 2003). Therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that CBT has less to say about authenticity than the modalities outlined above. It is possible that a CBT therapist may seek to ensure the development of rapport and trust via means other than ‘authentic’ relating. It may also be that authenticity discourse is particularly limited within CBT because any directive therapy interested in authenticity comes up against the paradoxical problem of providing a prescription for a mode of living that by definition rejects external dictates. In other words, if authenticity concerns a person’s relation to the world, then it cannot be externally imposed or taken up by repeating a set of actions.

To the extent that a discourse of authenticity enables self-creation and the exploration of values or relationships, it might be said that CBT misses out. However, cognitive-behavioural therapists have increasingly acknowledged the importance of the therapeutic relationship (Waddington, 2002). Furthermore, it might actually be argued that the collaborative approach of CBT encourages a certain level of equality that permits the therapist

greater freedom to self-disclose, perhaps enabling them to relate more ‘authentically’ than those constricted by such notions as non-directivity (Smith, 2010).

3.6.2. The therapeutic relationship

As already noted, research indicates that regardless which therapeutic modality is employed, it is the quality and strength of the client-therapist relationship that most consistently predicts good outcomes (Cooper, 2004; Roth & Fonagy, 2005). Authenticity has been linked to this in several ways. For example, Hammond et al. (2002) conceptualize authenticity as a clinical skill which enhances therapeutic communication. They researched therapists’ use of authenticity, empathy, respect, relating in the here-and-now, and confrontation; concluding that authenticity was an advanced counselling skill, with the constructive sharing of feelings in a ‘natural’ manner being an important aspect of a successful therapeutic relationship. Tudor & Worrall (1994) similarly suggest that authenticity is a skill that develops over time as a function of clinical experience and enhanced self-awareness.

Orange (2002) links authenticity with empathy, distinguishing between them yet arguing that both are necessary for optimal therapy. Morstyn (2002) views authenticity as equivalent to congruence, which he describes in terms of the therapist’s sincerity. Based on interviews with clinicians, he proposes that manualized psychotherapy encourages therapist inauthenticity with clients and argues that a greater focus on the relationship is essential. Following an extensive review of research on successful therapy, Cooper (2008) has also suggested that congruence, or the genuineness of the therapist, may be a key relational factor. Similarly, Keijsers et al. (2000) name congruence as one of several variables essential to developing and strengthening the therapeutic alliance.

It would appear that the links between authenticity in terms of congruence and the therapeutic relationship are strong; however, in a review of seventy seven studies Klein et al. (2002) found that only a third indicated congruence and outcome were positively linked. Similar results (thirty eight percent) were found in a review undertaken by Orlinsky et al. (2004). Research by Grafanaki & McLeod (2002) may be helpful in understanding these conflicted results; they conducted a narrative analysis of client and counsellor accounts of congruence and incongruence within six separate cases of person-centred therapy, and found that congruence was experienced as simultaneously relational and intrapsychic. They concluded that ‘participants experienced congruence in a variety of ways, suggesting that the construct does not describe a unitary phenomenon’ (p.20). It is clear that as with authenticity, the term congruence holds a variety of meanings, the complexity of which is increased if post-modern notions of ontology are considered.

Clarkson (2003) named five different types of therapeutic relationship: the working alliance, transference-countertransference, reparative-developmentally-needed, person-to-person and transpersonal. However, she described the person-to-person relationship as ‘the dialogic relationship or core-relationship... [concerning] the authentic humanness shared by client and therapist... the ‘real’ dimension of the therapeutic relationship’ (p.15). This notion links to the earlier seminal work of Martin Buber (1878-1965), who wrote extensively about the therapeutic relationship, arguing that growth or transformation could only be achieved by the therapist entering as ‘a partner into a person-to-person relationship... never through the observation and investigation of an object’ (1970: 179). He conceptualised these different modes of relating as engaging in either an I-Thou (authentic) relationship or an I-It (inauthentic) relationship. The suggestion here is that authentic relating involves mutual participation in the process of therapy and allows for ‘real’ meeting, whereby at least some of

what occurs is not an enactment of the past (i.e. transference) but is something created in the present. This moves authenticity discourse away from the notion of an inner self (as with congruence) and towards a more intersubjective understanding.

Stern et al. (1998) also suggest that ‘real’ meeting is possible, indeed they propose that it has a profound effect; however, they argue that it cannot be maintained for very long. They suggest that ‘moments’ of real meeting occur when the therapist and client meet in a way that ‘creates a new implicit, intersubjective understanding of their relationship and permits a new ‘way-of-being-with-the-other’ (p.300). They suggest that the emergent moment in some way challenges or threatens the stability of the ongoing initial state and in doing so offers a new intersubjective context. If accepted by both parties, then the ‘moment of meeting’ acts as a key element in bringing about change in implicit knowledge (procedural knowledge that is out of awareness, such as how to act, feel or think in a particular relational context). They contrast this with the effect of interpretation, suggesting that this brings about complementary changes in explicit knowledge.

As an intersubjective perspective suggests that authenticity is something co-created and relationally experienced, then perhaps it may also be located within the notion of ‘therapeutic play’. For example, Winnicott (1971) spoke of psychoanalysis being analogous to play, viewing the opposite as coercion or the imposition of something that was inauthentic to the client. As Phillips (2007:142) explains:

‘it is in the overlap, the transitional space between analyst and patient, that communication takes place. Playing stops when one of the participants becomes

dogmatic, when the analyst imposes a pattern that is not a piece with the patient's material.'

Returning to Clarkson's (2003) definition of the therapeutic relationship, the transpersonal may also be of relevance to the concept of authenticity. She defines it as 'the timeless facet of the psychotherapeutic relationship, which is impossible to describe, but refers to the spiritual, mysterious or currently inexplicable dimension of the healing relationships' (2003: 20). She points out that a large number of Eurocentric approaches to psychological healing exclude the 'transpersonal' and 'the religious' dimension of people's lives, but that this does not reflect the beliefs of many communities elsewhere. Whilst the work of Jung (1940) provides a significant exception, it would appear that Western psychotherapies (and psychology in particular) have embraced a positivistic, empiricist approach which dismisses the value of anything that cannot be scientifically tested or rationally explained. In recognition of this, it is worth noting that 'authenticity' may signify something transpersonal about which it is not really possible to speak (i.e. that exists outside of discourse). However, it is equally possible to view this idea as a 'spiritual discourse' in itself.

3.6.3. Ethics:

The above discussion suggests that authenticity is perceived within psychotherapy as something 'good' and desirable to achieve. However, it will be argued here that the relationship between authenticity and morality is ambiguous, with the potential for authenticity to be both 'good' and 'bad'. It may therefore be advisable for therapists to develop an awareness of the potential for authenticity to function as a normative discourse.

From a postmodern perspective, all values are socially constructed and thus culturally influenced. For example Loewenthal (1996) notes that Western standards were once set by Christianity, but have since been shaped by the scientific method and are now framed by individualism. In terms of psychotherapy this means that theories reflect the context of a society that prioritises individualism above group belonging. Similarly therefore for authenticity the standard has become centred on the person and humanistic values have been elevated. Such observations lead Russell (1999: 351) to caution that:

‘counselling propagates specific and individualist notions of selfhood, with full attention given to internal processes, yet little to an external context. This propagation is rarely made explicit, and may be based on false premises within which authenticity and self-determination are idealised and the doctrine of emotivism revered’.

It is notable that counselling psychologists work largely with individuals and with an intrapsychic focus (Blair, 2009). Therefore Russell’s caution prompts the question of whether ‘authenticity’ functions as an ideological mask within counselling, being only ‘jargon’ that can never be actualized (Adorno, 1964).

Taylor (1991) enthusiastically defends authenticity as an ideal, arguing that it is a viable ethical norm with the potential to counter the ‘malaises of modernity’ (p.10), e.g. the feared loss of meaning resulting from the fading of moral horizons. He suggests that authenticity is currently used to justify a narcissistic or ego-centric individualism which centres self-fulfilment on the individual, and argues that these self-centred modes of authenticity are a distortion of the original ethic, which needs to be ‘reclaimed’. He further

argues that the current interpretation of authenticity fails to acknowledge properly the dialogic nature of self-construction and the ‘horizons of significance’ against which choices are made meaningful. Taylor takes an anti-relativist stance but offers a thought provoking view of the potential for authenticity to operate as a guiding ethic when based upon an intersubjective understanding of the self.

The idea that authenticity requires the individual to put others first is one that finds support in the work of Levinas (1989), who argued that subjectivity is formed in and through subjection to the Other. According to Levinas, if people are ‘subject to’ putting the Other first then it demands an ethical response. This involves recognizing that the Other is fundamentally unknowable and therefore welcoming him/her without judgement. Such ideas suggest that aspects of authenticity discourse may function to encourage ethical behaviour, and it is apparent from the above exploration of authenticity within the therapeutic relationship that it is closely associated with such constructs as honesty, sincerity and warmth. However, there are a number of possible difficulties with authenticity that are not as commonly acknowledged.

Trilling (1971: 11) proposes that the concept of authenticity is widely used to justify unethical behaviour. He states: ‘much that culture traditionally condemned and sought to exclude is accorded considerable moral authority by reason of the authenticity claimed for it, for example, disorder, violence, unreason’. This suggests that it is necessary for public ethics or morality to place a limit on authenticity so that people can co-exist in a way that is acceptable to them. Harter (2005) notes how easy it still is to move beyond the boundaries of acceptable authenticity with others. She cites Lerner (1993: 15) as arguing that although truth-telling may act as a foundation for authenticity, it is possible that ‘in the name of truth, we

may hurt friends and family members, escalate anxiety non-productively, disregard the different reality of the other person, and generally move the situation from bad to worse’.

Devereux & Coe (2010) argue that the therapeutic space is valuable precisely because it offers a unique space in which the client may be free from the common experience of being subjected to other people’s authentic feelings, expressed needs and self-interests. They further argue that ‘allowing the ‘authentic’ self into the therapeutic space all too often means appropriating or intruding into that space’ (p.35). Their views are unusual in that they are not well represented in the psychotherapeutic literature; however, when consideration is given to scenarios such as a therapist wishing to act on their feelings of sexual attraction towards a client, then their point is clear. Furthermore, such ‘authentic’ behaviour may occur more often than thought, as demonstrated by Pope & Tabachnick’s (1993) national survey of American psychologists’ experiences of anger, hate, fear and sexual feelings for clients in therapy. Amongst their many interesting results they found that twenty seven individuals (out of two hundred and eighty five respondents) admitted to sexual involvement with clients.

Cohn (1993) proposes that authenticity is a goal that cannot be achieved because inauthenticity is an integral part of life, i.e. in the sense that everyone is moulded by external factors such as other people, circumstances, moral codes etc. His argument draws on the existential philosophy discussed above, e.g. the work of Heidegger (1962) and Sartre (1943). Waskul (2009) suggests that inauthenticity is not only inevitable but also a desirable feature of everyday social life, arguing that people would otherwise find themselves incapacitated by the ongoing need to define what is morally honest as opposed to socially right. However despite such reasoning, it seems likely that inauthenticity is not something many people may feel comfortable admitting to, certainly not without fear of being labelled as somehow

immoral (e.g. dishonest/insincere) or even unwell (e.g. having a ‘false’ or ‘split’ self). From a discursive point of view, this indicates that authenticity acts as a ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1980: 132), whereby assumptions regarding the ‘goodness’ of authenticity constitute a normative discourse, which not only encourages self-regulation but also serves to empower those appointed by society to guide the ‘immoral’ or heal the ‘sick’.

A number of socio-political critiques of the values held by Western psychologists have also highlighted the potential for unintentionally oppressive and Eurocentric practice (e.g. Jenkins, 2001; Sinclair, 2007). This suggests that the needs of many clients within a pluralistic society will not be met if humanistic values arising from a culture of individualism are imposed. However the polemic of authenticity-inauthenticity may be powerfully reinforced by the ‘realist, absolutist inclinations of the human knower’, whereby people exhibit a strong ‘tendency to assert the primacy – or truth – of either affirmation or critique’ (Downing, 2004: 138). In other words, it is difficult to hold on to the ambiguity of a value such as authenticity, perhaps even more so as it is tied to notions of subjectivity and one’s own experience of selfhood. However, it is arguably important to commit to an ongoing engagement with the ethics and values that inform psychotherapeutic work, for in the words of Christopher (1996: 24):

‘Ultimately counselling is part of a cultural discussion about ethos and world view, about the good life and the good person... the only real choice becomes how honest we are with ourselves about our inescapable moral visions.’

3.7 Summary

This review has sought to contextualise the research interest by demonstrating how constructions of authenticity are more varied and contradictory than may be commonly believed. Counselling psychology is based on conflicted notions of ontology and epistemology, adding to the potential for confusion with regard to this value; however, a socio-historical account of authenticity suggests there is a powerful discursive pull towards individualistic and modernist interpretations. It appears that authenticity may be reified and assumed good. As has been argued, if such a bias exists then it may be reinforced via the mechanisms of professional socialisation and the increasing professionalisation of counselling psychology as a whole. Attention has also been given to the place of authenticity within psychotherapeutic theory and practice. Whilst it is not possible to examine all the ways in which authenticity is conceptualized within counselling psychology, it is hoped that this discussion supports the researcher's view that authenticity discourse is worthy of exploration and may have important ethical implications.

There is a distinct lack of research regarding authenticity within counselling psychology and it is hoped that this review brings together a diverse array of authenticity constructs in a manner that conveys their richness clearly. It is argued that practitioners have a duty to examine the cultural, historical and discursive foundations of their practice, particularly in terms of values that may be used to shape subjectivity. This review is offered in support of the research purpose, which is to explore how counselling psychologists construct authenticity, to identify how such constructions may be used and to consider the possibility of extra-discursive influences. By exploring the ways-of-being that authenticity discourse makes available to therapists and their clients, it is hoped that the research will contribute reflexive knowledge to the discipline and support ethical practice.

3.8 Reflexive box 2

Writing the literature review:

The construction of this chapter was challenging in several respects, not least because the notion of ‘authenticity’ raises many philosophical questions, which my previous training and experience of quantitative research had not fully prepared me to engage with. Prior to any attempt at writing, I therefore felt it necessary to undertake what might be described as a process of philosophical education. Through reading and debate I discovered that I very much enjoyed this thought-provoking area of study, however whilst I happily realised a new area of interest, I became aware of how limited my understanding was in comparison to the vastness of the literature that might be connected to ‘authenticity’.

My early attempts at writing this chapter were overly descriptive and ‘factual’; reflecting both my desire to understand how authenticity might be located within the literature and my consequent need to contain all the new information and ideas that I was encountering (e.g. from existentialism, post-structuralism, postmodernism etc). My initial attempts to adopt a discursive view of the psychological literature felt somewhat unnatural and it took time to adjust to such a way of thinking. This difficulty might be conceptualised as reflective of my socialisation into the counselling psychology profession or the field of psychology in general. However, I hope that being thus socialised has not prevented me from asking questions, exploring assumptions and achieving a more critical account of how authenticity is represented in the literature.

The primary aim of the above literature review has been to provide a context for the

research; however, the reader is reminded that it represents only my construction and another researcher may well have focused on different things. This inherent subjectivity is somewhat disguised by the use of a traditional third person academic writing style, as absenting the author in this way implies that objectivity or impartiality is possible. I acknowledge that my account is inevitably partial and simplistic; however, it could be said that this acknowledgment functions as a rhetorical move to inoculate myself against any criticism regarding my chosen material (Finlay, 2002a). Furthermore, whilst the academic tone in the main body of the text might suggest scholarship or critical ability, the personal voice used here implies an ‘authenticity’ which may disguise that this too is a constructed account.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this study a discourse analytic approach known as ‘critical discursive psychology’ was used to explore counselling psychologists’ talk of authenticity. Critical discursive psychology addresses language use on several levels, allowing the researcher to consider how participants construct and negotiate meanings (discursive practice), as well as how wider social and institutional frameworks may shape these constructions and their availability (provide discursive resources). It also enables the researcher to adopt a critical realist stance, through which analysis can be extended to include the possibility of ‘extra-discursive’ factors such as embodiment, materiality and institutional power (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999).

This chapter accords with Silverman’s (1993:1) distinction between ‘methodology’ and ‘method’, whereby the former identifies ‘a general approach to studying research topics’ and the latter refers to specific research design. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to clarify the ontological, epistemological and axiological basis of the research and present the rationale for utilizing a critical discursive approach. In so doing, it will also address the issue of reflexivity and the question of whether it is possible to authentically study authenticity.

4.2 Qualitative research

Morrow (2007) suggests that the decision to use either a quantitative or qualitative method should be guided by the nature of the research question. For example, if the researcher wishes to establish occurrence rates, volumes or the size of associations between variables, then a quantitative approach may be necessary, whereas if the researcher wishes to obtain rich, descriptive accounts of the phenomenon in question, or to explore the meanings that people

make of their experiences, then a qualitative approach is more likely to be useful (Smith, 2008). The exploratory aims of this study indicated that a qualitative research orientation might be appropriate.

The term 'qualitative' encompasses a wide range of methods and a variety of fundamentally distinct epistemologies; however, qualitative methodologies tend to share a general interest in language and meaning. They are 'concerned with the quality and texture of experience, rather than the identification of cause-effect relationships' (Willig, 2008: 8). Instead of attempting a reductionist isolation of specific variables for measurement, qualitative researchers usually undertake a detailed exploration of the interwoven aspects of their topic, making analysis holistic and contextual (Yardley, 2000). Qualitative research is therefore likely to be focused on the individuals participating in the study, rather than concerned with discovering factors that might be generalised to large numbers of people. The notion of the researcher taking a 'neutral' or transcendental position is understood to be problematic, therefore reflexivity is also likely to be important and the potential for mutual influence is acknowledged and addressed (albeit to varying degrees).

Ponterotto (2005) suggests that qualitative methodologies are particularly suitable for counselling psychology research because they offer paradigms and methods that are more closely related to clinical practice than traditional science. Several writers support this argument and have noted parallels between the activity of qualitative research and therapy (e.g. McLeod, 2001; Morrow, 2007; Yardley, 2000). However, qualitative research is not without its detractors and some who hold a positivist view have criticised it as 'merely subjective assertion supported by unscientific method' (Ballinger, 2006: 235). Finlay (2006) argues that qualitative research is often inappropriately evaluated in terms of 'reliability',

‘validity’ and ‘generalisability’ (see method chapter for further discussion). However, Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009) write that the polarization of qualitative and quantitative research is no longer as prevalent as it used to be. Hayes (1997) criticises the categorical distinctions made between quantitative and qualitative research, pointing out that quantitative research always involves some level of interpretation by the researcher and that analysis in qualitative research has quantitative attributes, for example when either implicit or explicit judgements are made about the strength or frequency of an identified category.

In order to decide upon a particular methodological approach, it is important to consider the paradigmatic basis of the research, i.e. the epistemological and ontological position that the researcher wishes to assume. As Morrow (2007) notes, the underpinning paradigmatic stance of the researcher will shape the research question in the first place and will determine the standards by which the research might be evaluated. For example, a researcher who adopts a ‘scientific’ approach to knowledge acquisition is likely to shape their research questions in the form of hypotheses, to design experiments which isolate the variables of interest, and then evaluate the resulting data using statistical analysis. This reduction of phenomenon to numerical values appeals to positivist notions of objectivity and such research reflects the assumptions of empiricism and hypothetico-deductivism that the field of psychology has traditionally been associated with (Coyle, 2007a).

Qualitative epistemologies may be differentiated by the extent to which they hold that words accurately describe an experience and reflect ‘what is there’, or play a part in the construction of the meaning ascribed to it. The importance placed on the role of language will affect to what extent reflexivity is held to be a key part of the research and the degree to which researchers will attempt to ‘manage’ their ‘subjectivity’ (Willig, 2008). This research

recognises the ‘ambiguous, unstable and context-dependent character of language, the dependence of both observations and data on interpretation and theory... and the political-ideological character of the social sciences’ (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 1). In other words, ‘facts’ are understood to be theory laden and the result of interpretation. As Yardley (2000: 217) explains:

‘One of the primary reasons for adopting qualitative methodologies is a recognition that our knowledge and experience of the world cannot consist of an objective appraisal of some external reality, but is profoundly shaped by our subjective and cultural perspective, and by our conversations and activities... thus ‘truth’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘reality’ are actively created by the communal construction and negotiation of meaning’.

4.3 A critical-ideological paradigm

Qualitative researchers acknowledge that true objectivity is not possible (Morrow, 2007), however there is great debate regarding the extent to which it might be approached. As the previous quote illustrates, this has implications for what a researcher may claim they are able to say about ‘reality’. Different paradigms assume different positions on what can be understood as a continuum ranging from naive realism (which is akin to positivism), to extreme relativism (which rejects notions such as ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ altogether), with critical realists taking a variety of positions in between (Willig, 2008). This research might be said to fall within a ‘critical-ideological paradigm’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) because although it draws strongly upon social constructionism, it has a critical realist epistemology. In other words, this research takes the position that language constructs social realities, but that the limitations and possibilities of the material world will interact with and constrain these

constructions (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). A critical-ideological paradigm allows dominant social structures or meaning systems to be challenged (Haverkamp & Young, 2007) and by taking a critical realist view it became possible for this research to consider not only the use and implications of ‘authenticity’ discourse, but also whether such discourse is constrained or shaped by ‘extra-discursive’ factors, (such as the material aspects of embodiment or the effects of institutional power).

Critical realism originated in the work of Bhaskar (1975). As with social constructionism, it proposes that language is central to the way that people perceive the world, being constitutive of social ‘reality’ (Burr, 2003). However, it also posits that there is a material dimension interwoven with social reality and that material practices accommodate, (although do not determine), the discourses that arise within these material conditions. Critical realism therefore ‘combines constructionist and realist positions to argue that while meaning is made in interaction, non-discursive elements also impact on that meaning’ (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007: 102). Non-discursive elements are understood to be underlying, relatively enduring structures that may be biochemical, economic or social (Willig, 1999a). However:

‘the approach is different to positivism, which seeks to establish predictable patterns and the exact relation between cause and effect. To critical realists relations are complex and causality can exist on different levels. They generate tendencies rather than inevitable, specific and measurable conditions’ (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009: 42).

As this quote suggests, the relationship between the material and social phenomena is conceptualized as neither direct nor causal, but instead as a dynamic and dialectical interaction that holds ‘many more potentialities than could ever be realized at any one time’ (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007: 105).

Discourse analysis is a broad term which represents a variety of approaches, used across a range of epistemologies (Taylor, 2001). For the purposes of this research, a ‘critical discursive’ framework was chosen. Critical discursive psychology conceptualises people as both the producers and products of discourse (Edley, 2001b) and is considered appropriate for a critical-realist epistemology (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007).

Parker (1997: 296) has argued for the adoption of a critical realist position in discursive studies, stating that it ‘runs alongside the social constructionist attacks on the discipline while preventing a wholesale collapse into discourse idealism’, and furthermore that ‘only by understanding how the discipline of psychology reproduces notions of individuality and human nature –a realist endeavour – will it be possible to transform it’. Others such as Burr (1999) & Willig (2000), support this view, arguing that critical realism enables researchers to more fully theorize why people use certain constructions and not others, and that it prevents the marginalization of experiences that may be out of the realm of language (such as the embodiment of dance). Willig (1999a) also notes that although social constructionist discursive studies have identified ways in which discursive practices may impact on material practices, the reverse possibility has been effectively ignored.

For the purposes of this research, it is argued that additional insight may be gained via a critical realist lens; however, it is also acknowledged that any attempt to identify ‘the material’ can only ever be just an attempt. As Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007: 105) point out, the relationships between the material and the social are dynamic, non-linear and can ‘only be known through the phenomena that they generate’. This has led some to argue that critical realism has no systematic method for distinguishing between the discursive and non-discursive, and that any such decision will simply reflect the researcher’s political standpoint (e.g. Potter, Edwards & Ashmore, 1999). In a classic paper, entitled ‘Death and Furniture’, Edwards et al. (1995) further argue that the extra-discursive can always be analysed from a relativist point of view; that even death is constructed (e.g. as a passage to the afterlife, a stage in spiritual development, as natural, unnatural etc) and the act of hitting a table in order to prove that reality exists is still a representation that draws on the discourse of common sense. Such arguments lead Speer (2007) to conclude that critical realism involves the combination of two essentially incompatible epistemologies, with the resultant danger that analysis may veer inconsistently between the two. However proponents of critical realism, such as Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007), have countered that a systematic approach is possible and whilst they accept that knowledge of reality will always be limited, they argue for the utility of a reflexive critical realist methodology.

One of the alternative frameworks considered for this research was that of phenomenology and the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Such research might have explored what authenticity means to counselling psychologists and how this relates to their lived experience. However, whilst IPA presented an interesting possibility, a more critical view of language use was felt to be appropriate, i.e. instead of addressing ‘authenticity’ as an explanatory resource (e.g. authenticity means...) a discursive approach

allowed it to be treated as a topic in itself (e.g. what interests are served by the concept of ‘authenticity’ in this context?). This was considered to be particularly relevant for a term that may form part of the ‘identity work’ of counselling psychologists and may be used to guide or justify action within the therapeutic encounter. The aims of this research were therefore to consider what constructions of ‘authenticity’ may be linguistically available (and what material factors may constrain them), what functions these constructions may serve (the social interaction work they perform) and what the implications might be for subjectivity and ethical practice.

4.4 The ‘turn to language’ in psychology

The starting point of all discourse analytical research is the claim of structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy, that access to reality is always through language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002) and that language ‘is productive rather than (merely) reflective’ (Edley, 2001a: 435). These ideas emerged in a number of disciplines from the 1950’s onwards and are widely understood to have prompted a major reconsideration of Western philosophy (Edley, 2001a). This ‘turn to language’ was taken up by psychology in the 1970’s, when social psychologists began to challenge the cognitivism inherent to the field at that time (e.g. Gergen 1973), but it was not until the 1980s and 90’s, in a period sometimes referred to as the ‘turn to discourse’ (Parker, 2004), that the above ideas gained a serious foothold (Willig, 2008). As the development of these ideas inform this research, a number of key aspects will be outlined below.

Edley (2001a: 434) notes a long history of philosophical debate between those who have argued that knowledge is somehow grounded in reality (e.g. Locke and Hume) and those who have understood it to be (at least in part) a product of human mental functioning (e.g.

Kant and Nietzsche). However, the ‘correspondence theory of language’ (Gergen, 1999) was a commonly held modernist epistemology which assumed that the order and structure of language mirrored the world it described (Hansen, 2006). The challenge to this assumption emerged from a number of disciplines, including (amongst others) the philosophy of language (e.g. Austin, 1962; Wittgenstein, 1953), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), anthropology (Geertz, 1973) and linguistics (Derrida, 1973; Saussure, 1974). Together, such theorists prompted a radical questioning of whether language mapped onto reality in a straightforward manner, resulting in what has been called the ‘crisis of representation’. Methodologically this meant it was no longer possible to capture directly lived experience because data is always interpreted via the researcher’s world view and social positioning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The ‘turn to language’ is therefore said to have undermined a previous confidence in the twin notions of Truth and Reality (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1991).

All discursive methodologies share the premise that language is a dynamic form of social practice, used to construct social reality and achieve social objectives. Therefore, rather than providing a set of unambiguous signs which can directly describe internal states or external reality, language is understood to be productive (Willig, 2008). Such notions draw strongly upon the later philosophical work of Wittgenstein (1953), who argued that psychological states should be understood as social activities, rather than manifestations of deeper ‘essences’ (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Wittgenstein noted that language is used to inform, affirm, deny, speculate etc and he named such practices ‘language games’. These language games are embedded in ‘ways of life’ and individuals learn the relevant rules via their training as members of a community (Grayling, 1996). From this perspective, the meaning of a word such as ‘authenticity’ is its use within the many and various language-games which constitute language. In other words, there is no single correct meaning which

might be defined, because there is no essence lying hidden in discourse, language itself being a vast collection of different practices for which no systematic account can be given. Wittgenstein's influence upon the relativist tradition of discursive psychology is particularly easy to discern (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), however proponents of less relativist traditions have criticised the degree to which he neglected the role of the 'material' in structuring institutional power and therefore influencing language use (e.g. Parker, 1996).

Saussure (1974) and the field of structural linguistics that he inspired have also been of great influence upon discursive methodologies, the main argument being that whilst language is not determined by the reality to which it refers, it is still a structured system. Saussure defined the linguistic sign as a dyad, with the 'signifier' on one side (the physical sound or written word) and the 'signified' on the other (the mental concept). Perhaps his most lasting contribution is the understanding that the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary (Burr, 1995), the bond between them only working because there is a conventional relationship at play. However he also proposed that a sign gains its value by virtue of its difference from other signs, which together form a network or structure of words. This system of differences gives the signs their meaning, rather than the signs themselves. Saussure therefore suggested that 'langue' (the structure of language) should be the focus of linguistic study, because it acts as a stable system upon which 'parole' (situated language use) is dependent. He also argued that once a signifier is attached to the signified, the relationship between them becomes fixed. It is the stability and fixedness of this system that was challenged by the poststructuralists of the 1970's.

Derrida (1973) was a key poststructuralist figure who argued that the meanings carried by language are always temporary and contestable. He proposed that the meaning of a

signifier is context-dependent and does not become fixed to the signified, but is instead always gained in reference to other words, i.e. by that which it is not. Meaning is therefore constantly deferred from one signifier to another and when a person talks of something they are also always implicitly referring to what it is not, what is absent from it, e.g. authenticity is not inauthenticity. Derrida proposed that Western thought is founded upon the logic of such binary oppositions and that the nature of things lies in the relations between them rather than the things themselves (Burr, 1995). He further noted that meaning is a source of potential disagreement and conflict, creating a site in which power relations may be acted out; such ideas are central to the work of Foucault (1972), whose approach to discourse analysis is discussed below.

Discursive methodologies draw on both structuralist and poststructuralist ideas. Although some discursive approaches take a more poststructuralist view than others (see below), they share the understanding that language is constructive, i.e. that it shapes the meaning of experience, whilst acting as a site of conflict and potential change. This understanding extends to notions of 'the self', resulting in an anti-humanism which rejects the idea of the person as a 'unified, coherent and rational agent' with an 'essential nature' that waits to be revealed (Burr, 1995).

In the last couple of decades, discourse analysis has had a considerable impact on social psychology, particularly in Britain (Antaki et al., 2003). Examples of discourse analytic research of relevance to counselling psychology include: Reeves et al.'s (2004) study into counsellors' preferred responses to suicide talk, Crowe & Luty's (2005) analysis of the subject positions made available to a depressed client receiving Interpersonal Psychotherapy,

and Guilfoyle's (2002) examination of power in therapeutic relationships; these being just a few examples from a growing body of research.

The term 'discourse analysis' refers to a variety of research practices, with a number of differing aims and theoretical backgrounds; however, broadly conceptualized they are each concerned with the close study of patterns of language in use (Taylor, 2001). Wetherell (2001) identifies as many as six different discourse traditions that she considers relevant to social scientists, but two in particular have received wide recognition (Willig, 2008), these being 'discursive psychology' and 'Foucauldian discourse analysis'. As each of these is relevant to the present research design, they will now be addressed in further detail.

4.5 Discursive Psychology

Potter & Wetherell's (1987) book: 'Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour' introduced discursive psychology to Britain, although the label of 'discursive psychology' was only later attributed by Edwards & Potter (1992). The book provides a wide-ranging critique of cognitivism and is generally credited with boosting the 'turn to language' within psychology (Willig, 2008). It outlines an approach which was inspired by the fields of linguistics, hermeneutics and ethnomethodology. Drawing heavily upon conversation analysis, discursive psychology is concerned with 'the negotiation of meaning in local interaction in everyday contexts' (Willig, 2008: 95).

Discursive psychology attempts to identify how people 'manage accountability and stake in everyday life' and to understand the 'action orientation of talk' (Smith, 2008: 167). In other words, it is interested in how people use discursive resources and to what effect, i.e. the performative qualities of discourse. It conceptualizes psychological phenomena (such as

identity or authenticity) as discursive actions, being something that people *do* rather than *have* or *are*. Wiggins & Potter (2008) outline three main principles of discursive psychology: firstly that discourse is both constructed and constructive, secondly that discourse is action orientated and thirdly that discourse is always situated (within both a particular environment and a rhetorical framework). In recent years discursive psychology has also drawn increasingly on the principles of conversation analysis, reflected in a growing preference for ‘naturalistic’ studies (Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

Drawing on the work of Gilbert & Mulkay (1984), Potter & Wetherell (1987) developed the notion of ‘interpretative repertoires’, these being ‘clusters of terms organised around a central metaphor’, which people draw on to perform various actions (Wiggins & Potter, 2008: 74). Discursive psychology research seeks to identify interpretative repertoires and the rhetorical functions they serve. Talk is expected to be contradictory because it is constructed to serve particular interests and perform certain (not necessarily intentional) functions (Edwards and Potter, 1992), whilst also demonstrating that the discursive resources people draw on are inherently dilemmatic (Billig, 1991).

Discursive psychology has a social constructionist epistemology and subscribes to a relativist ontology. It does not seek to produce knowledge of ‘things’ but of how they are ‘talked into being’ (Willig, 2008: 108). It is commonly conceptualised as an analysis of language use on the ‘micro’ level (Parker, 1997) and it is arguably well suited to challenging ‘taken for granted’ psychological constructs (Burr, 1995). However, it has also been criticized for what Langdrige (2004: 345) describes as ‘the lack of a person’, there being no engagement with notions such as mental states or cognition. This means that despite having an emphasis on the action orientation of talk, discursive psychology is unable to account for

why particular individuals or groups pursue particular discursive objectives (Willig, 2008). Whilst its proponents argue that they are interested in the discursive construction of psychological concepts rather than hypothetical questions of subjectivity, discursive psychology relies upon notions of stake and interest, which it then fails to theorize in terms of motivation or desire (Willig, 2008).

Discursive psychology has also been criticised for the relativist assumptions which limit analysis of discourse to the research text. Critical realists such as Cromby & Nightingale (1999) argue that such an analysis fails to acknowledge the existence of extra-discursive factors such as embodiment, materiality and power (as outlined above). However, Edley (2001a) suggests that this is a misreading of relativism, which does not deny the ontological reality of an extra discursive realm, only that there is no way of apprehending it outside of language. In Edley's view: 'we should see that the realms of the material and the symbolic are inextricably bound up with one another and that it is a pretty futile task to try to tease them apart' (Edley, 2001a: 439).

4.6 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Whereas discursive psychology considers how people use discursive resources, Foucauldian discourse analysis is interested in examining which discursive resources are available and in what ways discourse may serve to construct 'subjectivity, selfhood and power relations' (Willig, 2008: 95). A crucial aspect of the Foucauldian perspective is that discourse limits what it is and is not possible to say with meaning (Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin & Stowell-Smith, 1995). Foucauldian discourse analysts are therefore interested in exploring the discursive worlds that people inhabit and what kind of actions and experiences different discourses make possible.

As discussed above (see literature review), Foucault proposed that dominant discourses ‘privilege those versions of social reality that legitimate existing power relations and social structures’ (Willig, 2008: 113). Therefore researchers who use a Foucauldian approach often examine the discursive construction of phenomena that might otherwise be taken for granted (Parker, 1997). Consideration is given to the social, institutional and historical frameworks within which discursive constructions are produced and power is exercised. This may involve the researcher undertaking a ‘genealogy’; a historical study which traces the development of the discourse in question and the identities that it may have constrained or made available. Key examples include Foucault’s (1990/1976) study of the history of sexuality and Rose’s (1985) study of the development of modern psychology. The literature review of this thesis includes a brief genealogical account of ‘authenticity’.

From a Foucauldian perspective ‘discourse’ might be defined as ‘sets of statements that construct objects and an array of subject positions’ (Parker, 1994: 245), whereas ‘subject positions’ are understood to be ‘places in discourse which carry certain rights to speak and specifications for what may be spoken’ (Parker, 1997: 291). The concept of subject ‘positioning’ (Davies & Harré, 1990) is significant because it enables the researcher to develop a critical understanding of power within a culture.

Foucauldian discourse analysts generally agree that discursive constructions have ‘real’ effects in terms of how people experience the world, both psychologically and physically, however there is disagreement regarding the extent to which material or social reality may in turn constrain discourse (Willig, 2008). Therefore, whilst Foucauldian discourse analysis is ‘social constructionist in orientation... the more realist versions of this approach also aspire to an understanding of the underlying mechanisms that give rise to the

conditions that make possible the formation of particular discourses' (Willig, 2008: 126). In other words, proponents of Foucauldian discourse analysis may adopt a critical-realist epistemology (e.g. Guilfoyle, 2002; Parker, 1992; Willig, 1999a).

In contrast to discursive psychology, Foucauldian discourse analysis is commonly conceptualised as acting on the 'macro' level (Parker, 1997), an advantage being that it is able to address wider issues of subjectivity, ideology and power. Spong (2010) suggests that this level of approach is useful in psychotherapeutic research because it is important to consider what counselling discourse enables practitioners to say, plus in what ways it obliges them to frame the difficulties that clients bring (e.g. as having a 'false self'). As Spong argues, such an analysis makes it possible to ask how clients are 'constrained and liberated by their engagement in counselling discourses' and to question how 'counselling discourses articulate with the broader social discourses which position our clients' (Spong, 2010: 68).

There are however several criticisms of Foucauldian discourse analysis, including from a discursive psychology perspective the idea that it pays insufficient attention to the local interactional context of language (Willig, 2008). The relationship between discourse and 'reality' is also a point of debate, involving the same arguments between relativism and critical-realism as noted above. Furthermore, whilst there is agreement that discourse is implicated in the construction of subjectivity, there is disagreement about whether something more than discourse is needed for identity formation. The question of what motivates an individual to choose or invest in one particular subject position over another has led several writers to incorporate psychoanalytic concepts into their analyses, (e.g. Frosh & Saville Young, 2008; Hollway, 1989; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). However, Davies and Harré (1999) argue that it is not necessary to invoke psychoanalytical constructs, suggesting instead

that a preference for a certain position can be accounted for by an individual's life experiences, (such as having been frequently located in that position, or having related to someone in that position). Critical realism offers an alternative perspective to this question, by considering the role of the extra-discursive.

4.7 Critical Discursive Psychology

The methodology employed in this research was that of critical discursive psychology. This third approach to discourse emerged in response to the disagreements that exist between discursive psychology and Foucauldian analysis. It represents a synthesis between the two and enables an exploration of both the micro and macro levels of discourse. A growing number of researchers have made use of this combined approach, for example: Adams (2001); Harper (1995); Wetherell (1998); Edley & Wetherell (2001). The originators of discursive psychology, Potter & Wetherell (1995), also support a mixed approach and have advised against distinguishing too sharply between discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Harper (1995) similarly proposes that discursive research should focus on interaction, social practices and dynamic processes, rather than create a false opposition between explanations based either solely within the individual or social structures (Harper, 1995).

Both discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis are rooted in a concern with the role of language and its productive potential (Smith, 2008). In combining them, critical discursive psychology aims to identify patterns of language use and related practices, demonstrating how these constitute people, whilst also drawing attention to the historical and social origins of that which is taken for granted. Edley (2001b: 189) proposes that 'three concepts lie at the heart of critical discursive psychology: interpretative repertoires,

ideological dilemmas and subject positions'. The following chapters will elaborate on the use of these concepts within critical discursive research.

A critical discursive approach was arguably the most appropriate method to use for this research for several reasons. By adopting a combined approach, it was possible to address not only how 'authenticity' is constructed and used for interactive purposes, but also in what ways the wider availability of 'authenticity' discourses might shape how counselling psychologists position themselves and their clients. Furthermore, a critical discursive approach is compatible with a critical realist epistemology, thus enabling the researcher to consider the role of the 'extra-discursive' (as discussed above). A combination allowed for a broad picture to emerge, relevant to the research questions of the study.

4.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a defining feature of many qualitative studies (Banister et al., 1994), particularly those influenced by social constructionism (Burr, 1995). It requires the researcher to consider how their involvement in a study has influenced and informed it. There are several different ways of approaching reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), however Willig (2008) identifies two main types: personal and epistemological. 'Personal reflexivity' requires the researcher to reflect upon the ways in which their own values, beliefs, experiences and so forth may have shaped the research. 'Epistemological reflexivity' requires the researcher to consider the assumptions they have built in to the research design and how these may have shaped the data. For example, epistemological reflexivity will involve thinking about how the research question has defined or limited what was 'found' and how else the research topic could have been investigated. By engaging in reflexivity, the researcher attempts to develop an increased awareness of their role in the co-construction of knowledge.

Hertz (1997) argues that researchers need to explicitly situate themselves within their studies because their influence will permeate every stage of the research process; from the formulation of questions and the choosing of participants, to the analysis and writing up. In acknowledgement of such arguments, this thesis includes a reflexive preface and the use of ‘reflexive boxes’ throughout. Being a discursive study, reflexivity has also been central to the analysis of data. As Fairclough (1995) argues, discourse analysts in particular will attempt to develop a ‘critical language awareness’, which recognises that the words used to ask a question will shape the response received. For example, if a participant is asked how they *feel* about something (such as authenticity), then the category of emotion is invoked and their reply is likely to orientate towards it, regardless of whether they previously ascribed importance to this aspect or not (Willig, 2008).

In drawing upon social constructionism, reflexivity is focused on the intersubjective nature of the research, rather than the management of the researcher’s subjectivity. Discourse analysis therefore requires all of the dialogue within an interview to be analysed, i.e. both that of the participant and the researcher. This is based on the view that each will actively and passively invoke identities and shared understandings as a framework for their speech (Yardley, 2000; Ochs, 1997). The research data is considered to be a co-construction. In a similar fashion, this thesis is understood to be a discursive construction, which different readers will interpret and engage with in different ways.

This research presents just one of many possible approaches to the topic of authenticity in counselling psychology and although the analysis is grounded in the data, another researcher’s interpretations may have led them to different conclusions. Whilst taking a critical discursive perspective has enabled the researcher to tentatively speak of the ‘extra-

discursive' and engage with the notions of power and material effects, it is acknowledged that one can never step outside of discourse nor make claims to objectivity. This raises questions about the value of such research findings, an issue that will be returned to in the following chapters.

4.9 Is it possible to authentically research authenticity?

There are as many answers to this question as there are possible definitions of 'authenticity' and much depends on the particular epistemological and ontological viewpoint from which the question is posed. It might be argued that authentically researching anything depends on the researcher's genuine interest, personal motivation and honesty; however, this answer places authenticity solely within 'the self' of the researcher and this is problematic from a postmodern or social constructionist point of view (see below). It may appear to fit well within a positivist or post-positivist research model, however researchers working within these frameworks are also those most likely to attempt to manage their subjectivity, not wishing to 'bias' the research data with their personal feelings and opinions. Whilst honesty is likely to be regarded as an important ethical consideration, the positivist/post-positivist researcher's personal interests and motivations may well be hidden in the name of objectivity, (not just from participants, but also from the readers of a 'scientific' research account). Of course the above definition may be contested, perhaps better captured by words such as 'being real' or having a 'personal engagement', however the same critique may apply. This raises questions regarding to what extent 'authenticity' may require 'congruent' expression and communication, or whether something such as 'intention' might be considered a sufficient 'measure'.

Putting intentions aside for a moment, the question of how to research authenticity so that it might itself be 'authentic' is perhaps far more problematic. Again from a positivist or post-positivist point of view, the limiting of the research 'variables' will extend to the topic of study and may lead to the use of a standardized measure, (such as the 'dispositional authenticity scale' developed by Wood et al., 2008). The researcher may also be concerned about whether the participants of a study feel able to give genuine and honest (hence 'authentic') answers to questions. Consideration may be given to whether results will be 'skewed' by participants wishing to present 'authentic' images of themselves and perhaps being reluctant to speak of their own 'inauthenticity'. From a positivist / post-positivist perspective there is therefore a sense in which the 'authentic' researcher must conduct their research in a split off ('objective') manner, whilst also attempting to measure and control for the 'authenticity' they are studying. This is problematic not least in how it appears to contradict possible 'meanings' of authenticity, but also from a psychologically theoretical point of view, whereby if 'authenticity' is tied to the notion of a 'real' or 'true self' that may be hidden from personal awareness and external observation, then it becomes extremely difficult to 'measure'.

In light of the above restrictions and difficulties, it might be argued that a qualitative method, such as a semi-structured interview, would allow more room for the participant's 'authenticity'. However, although an interview may enable more open and flexible data gathering than a standardized scale, a single question can be extremely leading and there are myriad ways in which a researcher may inadvertently guide a participant's responses, (from the giving of a smile or nod, to the exploration of a particular point which is of interest to them). Therefore to at least some degree, this echoes the problems identified within a positivist approach, whereby the researcher must 'manage' his or her influence.

If 'authenticity' in some way requires the freedom to express an 'inner truth', and if research means being systematic or managing one's influence, then perhaps it is not possible to 'do' authentic research. In other words, it could be argued that it is not possible to authentically research authenticity because the concept of research itself gets in the way. However, there are several methodologies that do not support the notion of an 'inner truth' or require the researcher to 'manage' their 'influence', for example those that draw on social constructionism.

Compared to the positivist perspective outlined above, social constructionism offers a vastly different understanding of whether it is possible to authentically research authenticity. Rather than having an essentialist focus on 'discovering' the 'truth' or 'the self', social reality is understood to be a dynamic co-construction, redefining 'authenticity' from the beginning. Participants are viewed not as 'passive containers of knowledge, but as active participants within the research process who construct, rather than report on reality' (Speer, 2002: 511). Furthermore, social constructionist epistemology holds that the researcher's influence or 'bias' is both 'unavoidable and theoretically interesting' (Speer, 2002: 511), blurring the traditional distinction between researcher and participant as both join in a 'participatory consciousness' (Heshusius, 1994: 15). However, this perspective raises questions about the usefulness of applying the word 'authenticity' at all. For example, if authenticity in research is not about the expression of a separate 'authentic self', revealing (or not) its 'true nature', but instead refers to the intersubjective, lived experience of research, then all research might be understood to be 'authentic' in some moment by moment sense, e.g. whether it is authentically 'boring', 'exhilarating', 'uncomfortable' or whatever is co-created. Whilst this does not mean that the word 'authenticity' and its use is of no interest, the question of whether one can authentically research authenticity may be misleading.

An alternative perspective to that outlined above ties the researcher's 'authenticity' to the issue of power and ethics. If speech is taken to be an act of communication intended to have specific effects (as opposed to a revelation of inner feelings or beliefs), then the relationship between the researcher and participant becomes a key concern (Leudar & Antaki, 1996). Whilst social constructionism indicates that the researcher cannot prevent their expectations 'infiltrating' the research, this does not mean that all is equal or that such 'influence' should be ignored. It has been argued that there is an inevitable power imbalance in every research relationship, regardless of the researcher's intellectual or emotional commitment to those who are participating (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Richards & Schwartz, 2002). Furthermore, the well documented phenomenon of 'researcher allegiance effects' acknowledges that the expectations, values and experiences of the researcher can have a substantial impact on every stage of a study (McLeod, 2010). This raises questions about whose agenda the study most serves and in what ways the researcher might acknowledge their inevitable influence upon it. From this perspective, it may be desirable to treat 'authenticity' as an open-ended ethical guideline (rather than an achievable goal for 'the self'), whereby the researcher seeks to empower participants, whilst reflexively acknowledging their impact upon the co-created research text.

A researcher who attends to the relationship between themselves and their participants is likely to place significant importance on reflexivity. A central aim of the reflexive process is to increase awareness of the researcher's inevitable influence and thus enable a more 'authentic' account, (although this is done with the acknowledgement that there is no ultimate 'truth' to be arrived at). This reflexive 'authenticity' may extend from the motivations for conducting the research (see preface and reflexive box 3) to the analysis and discussion. Such

an approach might be considered ethically important because as Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2009: 12) point out:

‘interpretation does not take place in a neutral, apolitical or ideology-free space... various paradigms, perspectives and concepts, as well as research and other political interests all bring out certain types of interpretation possibilities, at the same time as they suppress others, often under the guise of what is neutral, rational, right and correct’.

Acknowledging the role of power within qualitative research suggests that extra care might be taken to ensure that participants have the opportunity to say whether they feel they have been misrepresented or taken out of context, (perhaps via invitation to comment on their transcripts, as with this study). However, difficulties remain in proposing that some methods allow for more authentic research than others. For example, Potter (1996) has suggested that ‘naturalistic methods’ (such as observation) are preferable to other approaches, arguing that interviews and focus groups provide highly contrived data that is ‘flooded by the expectations and categories of social science agendas (p.135). However, Speer (2002) argues that such a distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘contrived’ data runs contrary to a social constructionist understanding of bias as a feature of all interaction, worthy of exploration in itself. Speer points out that even when participants are taking part in a purely observational study, the simple act of giving informed consent can change their behaviour, (an effect otherwise known as ‘observer reactivity’, see Heppner et al., 2008).

Once again it might be concluded that conducting ‘authentic’ research is either impossible, or that all interaction is authentic in a situated sense (i.e. it is authentic interview

talk etc). However, for the purposes of this research it is worth noting that a critical realist perspective on whether it is possible to authentically research authenticity may differ to the above in certain respects. For example, although critical realism draws heavily on social constructionism in terms of ‘the self’ and social reality, it also allows for consideration of ‘material practices’, which are ‘given an ontological status that is independent of, but in relation with, discursive practices (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007: 102). This opens up the possibility that ‘authenticity’ might be thought of as at least partially non-discursive, e.g. in relation to embodiment or the constraints of institutional power (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999).

It has not been possible to give an exhaustive account of whether one can authentically research authenticity in this short space (and perhaps an exhaustive account is itself not achievable); however, it is hoped that this exploration of the issues has added clarity to the rationale and the emphasis that is given to reflexivity throughout this thesis. The question of whether it is possible to authentically research authenticity will be returned to in the discussion chapter.

4.10 Summary of rationale

The aim of this research was to open up the taken-for-granted value of ‘authenticity’ within counselling psychology, to explore the ways in which it is constructed and to consider the implications of these constructions for ethical practice. There has been little previous research on ‘authenticity’ in counselling psychology, therefore it was hoped that this study might usefully contribute to relevant debate, particularly at a time when national economic pressures may once again increase the need for counselling psychology to define itself and its values.

Discourse analysis was identified as an appropriate conceptual framework for addressing questions about the construction of values and professional knowledge (Burr, 2003). This study was therefore designed to explore counselling psychologists' talk of 'authenticity', using data gathered from qualitative interviews. The rationale for focusing on 'talk' lies in a number of methodological assumptions, as informed by a critical-ideological paradigm. As discussed above, this paradigm draws strongly on social constructionism and post-structuralism, emphasising the role of language in creating social reality and a sense of 'self', whilst taking a critical-realist stance.

The rationale for choosing the particular discourse analytic approach of critical discursive psychology was that it allowed a multi-level analysis, making it possible to consider not just the situated ways in which 'authenticity' is constructed and used by counselling psychologists, but also how these constructions may relate to wider socio-political factors. A combined approach acknowledges that people are both the products and producers of discourse (Billig, 1991). The use of a critical discursive framework thus enabled a more comprehensive exploration of the ethical implications of 'authenticity' for counselling psychology practice than other methods. A critical discursive approach also enabled tentative consideration to be given to the 'extra-discursive', e.g. the material effects of institutional power (Parker, 1992). However, there is much ongoing epistemological debate regarding whether identification of the 'extra-discursive' is achievable (e.g. Edley, 2001a; Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007), therefore a further aim of this research was to explore the methodological feasibility of using a critical realist approach within a discursive study such as this.

4.11 Reflexive box 3

Is it possible to authentically research authenticity whilst training?

Yardley (2000: 223) suggests that reflexivity should include ‘consideration of how the work was influenced by external pressures or constraints (e.g. the priorities of funding bodies, or the difficulty of involving certain people in the research process)’. The institutional context for this research is therefore a relevant issue.

As a trainee counselling psychologist there are a range of institutional bodies which call for the completion of a doctoral level piece of research, (although as discussed in the literature review, this level of qualification is a relatively new requirement within counselling psychology). These regulatory organisations include the training institution (i.e. in my case, Roehampton University), the Health Professions Council and the British Psychological Society. The quality of the research project will ultimately decide whether the student will qualify, having undertaken a therapeutic training that has frequently cost them many thousands of pounds, in addition to much personal time and investment. Together these factors create an element of external pressure which may not be problematic while the student has an ‘authentic’ desire to engage with the research, but in my experience (dare I say it?) this may fluctuate! It may therefore be difficult to authentically research authenticity whilst training because of the pressure to meet externally set criteria in order to ‘pass’.

At the commencement of my training I was uncertain about the research direction I wished to take, however as I engaged with some of the philosophical issues inherent to counselling psychology, an area of interest became apparent and my enthusiasm grew from

there. As I became immersed in the various discourses surrounding research (epistemology, ontology and so forth), it could be said that I took up the subject position of ‘researcher’ alongside that of ‘trainee’. Alternatively, this might be described as my having been successfully ‘indoctrinated’ into a powerful, professionalisation process. It is therefore possible to view my engagement with the research as both authentic and inauthentic. For example, the research interest could be understood as an authentic co-creation between myself and the university (in terms of both individuals and culture), through which I positioned myself as a researcher. In contrast, an array of powerful regulatory organisations predetermining that I take up such a subject position, suggests inauthenticity. It seems that both terms could apply.

A further difficulty that might be attributed to authentically researching authenticity while training is that the researcher is fully immersed in the discourse and culture that is being critiqued. On the one hand the research might be considered more authentic because it comes from ‘within’ the culture that is being examined. However, on the other hand ‘it is difficult, if not by definition impossible, for the researchers to clarify the taken-for-granted assumptions and blind spots in their own social culture, research community and language’ (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009: 9). Discourse analysis goes some way to addressing such

concerns because it does not require the researcher to attempt a false separation between themselves and their research topic; the researcher’s talk is analysed alongside that of the participants. Furthermore, reflexivity is used to aid consideration of contextual factors and enable new perspectives. However, whilst this makes interpretation possible, the above

limitations still apply. Perhaps therefore the findings of this study reflect the particular research culture encouraged in my training institution, or of my supervisors; an expression of forces external to me and hence lacking in ‘authenticity’. However, if all is ‘co-construction’, then neither the label of authenticity nor inauthenticity seems particularly applicable. As argued above, it depends on your paradigmatic view of the question.

One final difficulty of note in researching ‘authenticity’ whilst in the midst of training was balancing the construction of a counselling psychologist identity with the deconstruction of counselling psychology values. This difficulty was most salient in the third year of my training, when the teaching of CBT and such modules as ‘assessment and diagnosis’ stood in stark contrast to the social constructionist and post-modern interests of my research. However, while this was somewhat unsettling at times and may have shaped the research design (see preface), I believe that this conflict reflects the epistemological and ontological tensions that counselling psychology embodies. I therefore hope that by engaging with it I have developed my critical awareness and enhanced my capacity for ethical practice.

5. METHOD

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the research design. It details how the study was conducted and discusses the standards by which it might be evaluated. The following sections address ethical considerations, the participants and the research procedure, the use of semi-structured interviews, the analytic strategy and the issue of evaluative criteria in discursive research. It is acknowledged that ‘the researcher is a central figure who influences the collection, selection and interpretation of data’ (Finlay, 2002b: 531), therefore this chapter also contains two reflexive boxes with a focus on the research process.

5.2 Ethics

This study was designed and undertaken in accordance with the British Psychological Society’s *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (2009), the Division of Counselling Psychology’s *Professional Practice Guidelines* (BPS, 2005) and the Division of Counselling Psychology’s *Guidelines on Confidentiality and Record Keeping* (BPS, 2002). Approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Roehampton University prior to the research commencing. This involved submitting an ethics application and undertaking recommended amendments until agreement was reached.

Adherence to the above named ethical guidelines helped ensure that the well-being of the participants in this study was prioritised. Consideration was given to the possibility that talking about ‘authenticity’ might challenge a participant’s established values and ontological assumptions, or that the exploratory nature of the research questions might inadvertently lead to a discussion that provoked anxiety. Although it is not possible to eliminate such risks

entirely, these issues were addressed via the obtaining of informed consent, the sensitive and role-boundaried conduct of the interviewer and the provision of an appropriate debrief (see below). It was also acknowledged that research generally involves an imbalance of power, with the investigator tending to hold more information about the study and at least to some extent directing the research proceedings (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). Being a critical discursive study, such power dynamics were given detailed consideration throughout the research process and analysis (see reflexive box 4).

Informed consent is an important ethical requirement for most research. In this case it was obtained via the provision of a 'recruitment information' sheet (Appendix A), which was given out as part of the recruitment process (see below) and further discussed prior to the commencement of each interview. Key points were reiterated in a 'participant consent form' (Appendix B) which participants were requested to read and sign before beginning the interview. This assured participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and outlined the provisions for ensuring confidentiality. Additional time was allocated at the end of each interview in which to debrief and discuss any concerns that may have arisen. A 'debriefing information' sheet (Appendix C) was issued with details of how to obtain further support if necessary. At this point, participants were also invited to feedback on the research process, and if satisfied, to sign an agreement that the interview was conducted in an ethical manner (included in Appendix C).

For the purposes of confidentiality, each participant was allocated an identification code consisting of letters/numbers chosen at random. All identifying information (names, dates, places etc) was excluded from transcription. All recordings and transcripts were securely stored in accordance with British Psychological Society guidelines (BPS, 2002) and

care was taken when choosing transcript excerpts to avoid those that might lead to the possible identification of participants or their clients.

5.3 Reflexive box 4

Power and ethics in the research design:

Prior to commencing this study I considered a variety of ways in which to address the potential power imbalance between myself as researcher and my participants, this being important both for ethical reasons and the ‘usefulness’ of the research findings (see discussion chapter). For example, Finlay (2002a) suggests that the unequal power dynamics of research may be lessened by co-opting ‘participants’ into the study as ‘co-researchers’. This might take the shape of a ‘co-operative enquiry’ (e.g. Ellis et al., 1997), whereby the researchers are simultaneously participants in their own research and ‘engage in cycles of mutual reflection and experience’ (Finlay, 2002a: 218). Unfortunately however such an approach seemed inappropriate for a project undertaken so that one person might be assessed for qualification as a psychologist. I was also aware that co-opting carried the impracticality of recruiting busy professionals who might perceive such involvement as too time-consuming. I decided instead to offer each participant a copy of their interview transcript, thus at least providing an opportunity for them to make comments and give feedback. I also used a flexible interview style (see Reflexive box 5: ‘conducting the interviews’) so that participants might be empowered to take discussion forward as they wished.

The above noted restriction of researcher and participant to more ‘traditional’ roles might be considered one way in which the ‘authenticity’ of the participants’ contributions was limited. Furthermore, in practice I found that few participants actually chose to receive a copy of their interview transcript and so feedback was limited. Again this may have been a reflection of the time that participants felt they had available to contribute, or it may be that I could have been more encouraging or persuasive; however, to do so would perhaps have risked abusing researcher power in a different way. It is also arguable that whilst co-optive ‘tactics’ may appear to reduce unequal power dynamics, the problem of an essentially unequal relationship could remain in disguised form, with the continuing risk that multiple voices might be subsumed into one authorial account (Finlay, 2002a).

Mehan (1996) suggests that participants may attribute particular power and status to researchers with professional titles such as ‘psychologist’. I hoped that this concern might be mitigated by the fact that I was a trainee psychologist interviewing already qualified psychologists, (my feeling being that the participants were more experienced than I); however, I was conscious that interviewers may be attributed power because they are viewed as the ‘expert’ on their research subject. I was also aware that I was the one who would gain the most benefit from others participating. Once I undertook the interviews, I found that my sense of the power dynamic varied, with some participants appearing to be more concerned about the ‘correctness’ or ‘usefulness’ of their answers than others. A discursive research design encourages sensitivity to such variations in talk and I have attempted to address these differences within my analysis.

Whilst critical discursive psychology requires that the speech of both researcher and participant is analysed, the interpretative nature of the analysis means that it will inevitably be influenced by the researcher's preconceptions, theoretical commitments and personal characteristics (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). As Stenner (1993) argues, research always involves the issue of having power over other's words. Therefore whilst the above text and other reflexive accounts in this thesis are intended to increase the transparency and accountability of the research, it is necessary to acknowledge that another researcher may well have come to different conclusions.

5.4 Participants

Eight individuals took part in this study, all of whom had completed a British Psychological Society accredited training in counselling psychology and were employed as practising counselling psychologists in England. Seven of the participants were female, one was male. Five identified themselves as White British, three as White Other. All held positions as counselling psychologists within the NHS, one via a private sector organisation. Five were also working in private practice. Reported clinical experience ranged from three-and-a-half to twenty-three years, with a mean average of 7.4 years. (See Appendix D for a summary table of the demographics). All of the participants stated that they were influenced by more than one theoretical orientation. A variety of therapeutic approaches were named including the humanistic, person-centred, psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, schema-based, eclectic and integrative.

Willig (2008) notes that the selection of participants should be informed by the research question, although numbers will also be guided by time and pragmatic considerations. The rationale for interviewing practising counselling psychologists was that they would be sufficiently socialised in their role as ‘counselling psychologist’ to draw upon the discursive resources commonly available to such professionals. The decision to use counselling psychologists rather than other psychotherapeutic professionals was based on the researcher’s positioning and questioning of the counselling psychology field (see preface), plus the view that counselling psychology’s conflicted epistemological and ontological foundation creates a useful arena for critically examining the constructed nature of therapeutic values.

It could be said that a ‘purposive sampling strategy’ (Polkinghorne, 2005) was used for this research, i.e. those who fell within the category of practising counselling psychologist were purposively selected; however, the term ‘sampling’ carries misleading connotations of statistically based research. In quantitative studies participants are selected because they fulfil the representative requirements for generalizing results to other contexts, whereas in discursive research the participants are chosen because they can provide substantial contributions to exploring the use of language in a situated context and in relation to specific bodies of knowledge. As Starks & Trinidad (2007) argue, the concept under study is the unit of analysis (i.e. talk of authenticity), not the individual participant. This means that ‘variables’ such as gender or ethnicity are not ‘controlled’ unless they are directly relevant to the research question; although participants may be selected on the basis that they share a particular ‘culture’ or belong to a limited ‘category’ (Taylor, 2001).

In terms of participant numbers, Morse (2000) suggests that the number required in a qualitative study for it to reach 'saturation' (the point at which key areas will have been covered) depends on several factors, including the quality of the data, the scope of the study and the choice of method. Discourse analysis is by nature an iterative and time-consuming method, which limits the maximum number of participants it is practical to study within a limited timeframe; however, this is balanced by the potential for obtaining extremely rich data. Turpin et al. (1997) argue that five participants is the minimum for postgraduate discursive research.

5.5 Procedure

An invitation to participate was distributed via the Division of Counselling Psychology's fortnightly newsletter, after which further participants were obtained by word of mouth and a process of 'snowballing' (Polkinghorne, 2005). Interested individuals were emailed a copy of the 'recruitment information' sheet (Appendix A) and the 'participant consent form' (Appendix B). Arrangements were then made to meet for the interview, which was held at a time and place of convenience to the participant. Participants were interviewed individually and in privacy, in a quiet location of their choosing. The majority of the interviews took place in participants' homes, although some took place in their work settings and where this was not convenient the researcher arranged a suitable alternative. Prior to the commencement of each interview, the researcher talked through the 'recruitment information' sheet and invited the participant to ask any further questions that they might have. The participant was then asked to read and sign a copy of the 'participant consent form'. The interviews lasted on average approximately an hour and were recorded using a digital recorder. Having completed the interview, a debriefing was given (see Appendix C) and any further questions were discussed.

5.6 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews are commonly used within discursive research (Willig, 2008). They allow the respondent to answer in their own words and the interviewer to clarify their understanding and adapt to new developments or issues by probing for further information. Smith & Osborn (2008) argue that the advantages of semi-structured interviews include that they facilitate rapport, allow the researcher flexibility and tend to produce rich data. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method for this study because they are well suited to exploring complex issues and they provide an arena in which available discursive resources and interpretative repertoires might be utilized. It is however important to note that some discourse analysts have strongly objected to the use of interviews in discursive research (e.g. Potter, 1997), arguing instead for the use of naturalistic methods such as observation. The main disadvantage attributed to semi-structured interviews is that the participants will orient themselves towards the interview situation, resulting in an analysis that reflects the participant's discursive actions within the interview context rather than everyday life (Willig, 2008).

Whilst the above point is acknowledged (and will be returned to later), this research draws on a number of counter arguments concerning the distinction between 'contrived' and 'natural' data. For example, Silverman (2001: 159) argues that since 'no data are ever untouched by human hands... the opposition between naturally occurring and researcher provoked data should not be taken too far'. Speer (2002) further notes that a preference for 'natural' data contradicts the discursive premise that 'context effects' are a feature of *all* interaction, to be explored rather than controlled, and that 'the status of an interaction as 'natural' or 'contrived'... may only be discernible by viewing participants' orientations to it as such' (p.518).

Consideration was given to the use of focus groups for collecting discursive data; however, such groups may be dominated by a few participants, potentially transforming the data from an analysis of the research topic to that of group relations (Taylor, 2001). By the same argument, minority discourses may be overridden and the group may simply present the researcher with an agreed version. While it might be argued that focus groups allow for more 'natural' discourse, the same counter arguments apply as previously outlined. This study therefore used semi-structured interviews as a means to explore talk of authenticity, hopefully enabling some insight into the discursive resources available to counselling psychologists and how they might be used; the purpose being to open up questions about authenticity as a taken-for-granted value.

Having decided upon the use of semi-structured interviews, a pilot interview was conducted (see Appendix E). The aim of this was firstly to test the interview questions and secondly to provide the researcher with some concrete experience of interviewing. The pilot was helpful in choosing questions and highlighted that it was not necessary to ask many in order for rich data to emerge. The final interview schedule consisted of five questions in total, starting with a general introductory question which asked the participant (i) what authenticity meant to them, followed by (ii) what authenticity brought to mind in terms of their experience of counselling psychology training and (iii) what place authenticity has in practice. Participants were then asked (iv) whether there were any barriers or difficulties relating to authenticity and (v) how they might describe when authenticity is present. The order of questions was provisional and participants were given the opportunity to raise issues at any point in the interview. Participants were also encouraged to elaborate on their answers, without breaking confidentiality, with examples from clinical experience. The interview schedule was conceptualised as a guide, rather than a strict set of questions, meaning it was

used consistently but with flexibility. The interviewer contributed a range of responses such as paraphrasing or probing questions in order to clarify. At the end of the interview, the participant was asked if there was anything they would like to add or discuss further.

The chosen interview questions and their variants set the discursive environment, whilst introducing both descriptive and evaluative discursive tasks for the participants (Edley & Wetherell, 2001). The questions were designed to explore the interpretative resources that counselling psychologists might have available with regard to authenticity and the possible subject positions such discourses provide. It was assumed that the participants responses would be both occasioned (i.e. produced for the particular context of the interview) and yet indicative of collectively shared discursive constructions of authenticity within the profession of counselling psychology.

5.7 Reflexive box 5

Conducting the interviews:

As a novice interviewer, I was conscious of Hermanowicz's (2002: 479) caution that 'great interviewing is deceptively difficult, partly because it is an acquired ability that takes time to develop' and I had several concerns which may have impacted on the data collection process. These included the risk of inadvertently flooding the interviews with the research agenda (see discussion chapter) and the worry that I might not gather sufficiently rich data for the analysis to be of interest.

Holstein & Gubrium (1995) suggest that researchers should develop an ‘active orientation’ to interviewing which recognises the co-construction of meaning, and Potter & Wetherell (1987) similarly propose that discursive researchers should embrace an ‘active’ role by questioning the assumptions of participants and offering contradictory views. Whilst in agreement with the intersubjective premise underlying these suggestions, I was mindful of the ethical risks noted above and I wished to empower interviewees as much as possible. I therefore chose not to adopt a ‘challenging’ interview style, preferring to be more reflective instead (e.g. as with Edley, 2001b). I hoped that this would enable participants to feel at ease and draw more freely on the range of discourses available to them. This means that while I did ask questions and seek to explore participants’ views, I did not intentionally introduce contradictory opinions. One possible consequence is that I may have missed opportunities to explore conflicting discourses and the implications that they carry, another is that it limited the ‘authenticity’ of my own contribution to the interviews.

If the above text suggests that I sought to achieve some form of neutrality, then it should be noted that I believe this is impossible to achieve. As Dickerson (1998: 33) argues, ‘the interviewer cannot possibly avoid shaping the interaction’ and even minimal responses such as ‘mmm’ or ‘yes’ will have an influence. Although I was keen not to ask ‘leading’ questions, simply asking something such as ‘are there any difficulties?’ will introduce the idea that difficulties exist and therefore set a particular frame for the participant to orientate to. This is why Potter & Hepburn (2005) argue that participants’ comments should not be analysed out of context, but always in relation to the specific

question posed. While care may be taken to not dominate an interview, no question can be viewed as ‘neutral’. Discourse analysis therefore addresses the contributions of both the researcher and the participant, viewing the researcher’s influence as both unavoidable and theoretically interesting (Speer, 2002).

An acknowledgment of my influence as researcher may suggest a need to further clarify my views for the present reader. In addition to the information given in the preface, I might perhaps position myself as ‘a critically informed humanist’, i.e. someone who embraces an ethical framework based upon humanist principles tempered by a critical and social constructionist view of ‘the self’. The problem with such an explanation is that it assumes the possibility of a fixed and knowable subject position, something that reflexive analysis tends to dispute (Finlay, 2002a). For example, the analysis in this study demonstrates that diverse and shifting positions were mutually adopted (see results chapter) and in recalling my agreement with competing notions of ‘authenticity’, I am reminded that values, meaning and identity are not fixed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

5.8 Transcription

Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix F for a complete example). For reasons of confidentiality, names and identifying locations were removed from the text and the interviewees are referred to as ‘participants’ in all transcriptions and extracts. All utterances were transcribed, including pauses and interruptions. Pauses were measured in seconds, although a comma was used to code pauses of less than one second. The researcher

took the position that the current research would not gain from measuring pauses of lesser duration (as might be the case in a study focused solely on the level of discursive psychology or conversation analysis).

The transcription notation system (see appendix E) was derived from those used in the critical discursive psychology studies of Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007) and Wetherell (1998), which were in turn primarily based upon the transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (1985). Jefferson's notation system was developed for conversation analysis and has since been widely adopted in discursive psychology (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). It has allowed for the standardisation of transcription symbols, each of which is intended to represent a feature of talk that research has suggested participants treat as relevant in interaction, e.g. pause length, intonation and emphasis (Jefferson, 2004). Transcribing at this level of detail makes clear 'the jointly constructed, socially engaged nature of what is going on' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005: 289); however, it is acknowledged that transcription is a 'messy and imperfect process that constructs a textual version of the original interaction' (Nikander, 2008: 226) and while care has been taken to provide an 'accurate' representation, transcription will always entail the 'selective rendering of the data' (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984: 12).

5.9 Data analysis

Discourse analysis can be understood as a particular type of informed reading (Dickerson, 1998), which requires the researcher to ask what the text is *doing* rather than simply what it might be *saying* (i.e. to read for action orientation as well as meaning). It is often described as a sensitivity to language instead of a 'method' (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Willig, 1999 b), and whilst a number of leading discourse analysts have suggested procedural guidelines (e.g.

Billig, 1988; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), each cautions against following them too rigidly. As detailed below, the researcher in this study loosely followed the guidelines proposed by Willig (2008), whilst also drawing on the more specific critical discursive psychology framework outlined by Edley (2001b).

Dickerson (1998: 30) identifies four key resources for undertaking a discourse analysis, all of which were utilised within the present study: *the previous literature* (whereby an awareness of different perspectives may enable greater sensitivity to features of speech and their functions); *the text itself* (e.g. noting contradictions or variation within the text so as to explore the constructed aspects of discourse); *the 'analytic imagination'* (e.g. questioning how something might otherwise have been formulated in order to see what is distinctive about a particular construction); and *the researcher's intuitive or tacit skills as members of a linguistic community* (whereby the researcher's intuitive awareness of language-use can help to identify areas of interest, such as knowing that a long pause may signal a problem).

The analytic process described in this account arguably began with the transcribing of the interview recordings, as the process of adding detailed notation assisted in developing a familiarity with the data. Once the transcribing was complete it was followed by several straight-through readings of each transcript, so that the researcher could experience and further note some of the discursive effects of the text. The next task was to identify the different ways in which the discursive object (i.e. 'authenticity') was constructed. This was achieved by highlighting all the instances of reference to authenticity, both implicit and explicit. A repeated reading and coding of content, with a focus on the differences between constructions, then enabled recognition of distinct discourses and allowed for selection of relevant material for further analysis, i.e. sections of text that demonstrated consistent and

variable patterns of language use in the construction of ‘authenticity’. It is important to acknowledge that as coding is guided by the nature of the research question, the analysis will not address all aspects of the text (Willig, 2008).

The data was organised into a form of ‘thematic’ categories, with extracts often included under several headings. Consistent with a critical discursive approach, each category was conceptualized as representing an ‘interpretative repertoire’ (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), this being ‘a recognisable routine of arguments, descriptions and evaluations distinguished by familiar clichés, common places, tropes and characterizations of actors and situations’, the existence of which becomes apparent via its repetition throughout the research text (Edley & Wetherell, 2001: 443). The analysis then progressed to a more detailed examination of the functional dimensions (i.e. action orientation) of the interview talk and the subject-positions taken up within it. This enabled a broader level of analysis whereby the local deployment of interpretative repertoires and the availability of particular subject positions may be taken to indicate something of the wider ideological context. By locating authenticity constructions within wider discourses and power relations it was possible to consider both the implications for subjectivity and the possibility of extra-discursive constraints and influences. The final stage of analysis therefore involved considering the implications of the identified repertoires for the counselling psychology profession in relation to the broader social and institutional frameworks within which the research material was produced.

5.10 Evaluative criteria

Yardley (2000) notes that qualitative research is often misjudged via the use of evaluative criteria meant for quantitative studies, e.g. in terms of reliability and validity. These criteria draw upon a positivist scientific discourse and are inappropriate for discourse analytic studies

because they assume an objective reality in which the researcher and the participant are separate (Taylor, 2001). A variety of alternative criteria have been proposed (e.g. Henwood & Pigeon, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which instead give recognition to the situated, relational and intersubjective context of qualitative research. Finlay (2006: 319) suggests that these criteria are encompassed by the notions of ‘rigour, ethical integrity and artistry’. She notes a shared concern for research to be coherent, logical, systematic and relevant; where relevance includes both the contribution of the research and its impact on the reader.

When specifically evaluating discursive research, the above points might be addressed in several ways. For example, Starks & Trinidad (2007) suggest that the credibility of a discursive study may be judged by the coherence of the analytic argument and the evidence offered to support it. Nikander (2008) similarly argues that extracts should be offered as a central means of increasing transparency and demonstrating the rigour of the analytic process. The interpretations in this account are thus all supported by referenced extracts from the interview transcriptions and readers are encouraged ‘to make their own checks and judgements’ (Potter & Edwards, 2001: 108).

Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter (2003) also provide useful guidance for evaluating discursive research, having identified six ways in which a discourse analysis may fall short. These include: ‘*under-analysis through summary*’ (i.e. merely to summarise the participant’s talk in the researcher’s own words, thereby losing information but adding none); ‘*under-analysis by taking sides*’ (i.e. taking a position towards the text, rather than providing a detailed examination of rhetorical and discursive strategies, plus potentially distorting or oversimplifying the data to fit the researcher’s position); ‘*under-analysis through over-quotation or through isolated quotation*’ (i.e. referring to quotes rather than analysing them);

'the circular identification of discourses and mental constructs' (i.e. using quotes to identify a descriptive term and then using the descriptive term to explain the quotes rather than examine the details of the talk); *'false survey'* (i.e. extrapolating from the data to the world at large and assuming that findings are true for all members of the same category); and *'analysis that consists in simply spotting features'* (i.e. merely identifying established discursive features).

As Antaki et al.'s (2003) guidelines suggest, discourse analysis requires a close engagement with the research text, meaning that researcher reflexivity is an essential aid in evaluation. As researchers 'make public their own stances, motivations, assumptions, and biases, the research gains a level of honesty that contributes to the trustworthiness (rigor) of the study' (Morrow, 2007: 216). Public scrutiny of the research is also facilitated by the offering of an account of the research decisions (Finlay, 2002a). Both these aspects of reflexivity have therefore been addressed in the preface and reflexive boxes of this thesis.

Finally, it is important to distinguish between the evaluative criteria of 'generalisability' and 'transferability', for as Finlay (2006: 321) explains:

'qualitative researchers do not seek to extrapolate statistically findings from a specified sample to the wider population. Instead, they are concerned to show that findings *can* be transferred and *may* have meaning or relevance if applied to other individuals' (italics in original).

Critical discursive psychology recognises the intersubjective and co-constructed nature of the research interview and is interested in exploring the complexity and multiplicity of contested meaning in the social world, therefore to speak in terms of generalisability is inappropriate.

However, in having a critical-realist epistemology and in drawing upon Foucauldian notions of discourse, it becomes possible to tentatively and without determinism speak of the possible transfer of findings. Again, the researcher's openness and reflexivity aids in deciding whether results may be in some sense transferable to other individuals or contexts; nevertheless the overall purpose of the research remains not to generalize, but to add to the existing discourse around the research topic and to open up new ways of talking about it.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, this analysis draws upon the guidelines offered by Willig (2008) and Edley (2001b). These guidelines indicate three concepts of particular interest to critical discursive psychology: interpretative repertoires, subject positions and ideological dilemmas. This chapter therefore begins with a brief explanation of these terms, before moving on to present the research findings. The implications of the findings and the limitations of the study will form the topic of the final chapter.

The following analysis represents the researcher's interpretation of the data and this may differ from that of the reader, however quotes are offered throughout in order to increase transparency and demonstrate the rigour of the analysis. It is important to recognise that discourse analysis does not presume to have access to the intentions of research participants, nor does it seek to 'reveal' intentionality by exploring rhetorical function. It is therefore understood that language use may have consequences that the language user did not intend (Coyle, 2006; Pugh & Coyle, 2000).

6.2 Discursive terms

Potter & Wetherell (1987: 149) define interpretative repertoires as 'systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena', often categorized by 'metaphors and figures of speech'. In other words, they are culturally familiar and habitual lines of argument, which individuals draw on flexibly in order to perform different actions (Wetherell, 1998). Edley (2001b) suggests that interpretative repertoires are important within critical discursive research because by looking at the different ways in which people talk

about a given topic, it is possible to gain some understanding of how such talk both enables and limits the construction of the self and others. The term ‘discourse’ is also used within critical discursive research, however it is more closely linked with Foucauldian notions of power, the construction of institutions and the ways in which people may be ‘subjectified’. ‘Discourse’ is therefore a particularly useful term when extending analysis beyond the immediate linguistic context in order to consider how available forms of language may limit or shape what it is possible to say, think or do (Burr, 2003). However, despite these differences the concepts of ‘discourse’ and ‘interpretative repertoires’ are closely linked, and as Edley (2001b: 202) notes, both terms share ‘the same major implication; namely, that in becoming native speakers, people are enticed or encultured into particular, even partial, ways of understanding the world’.

Two further concepts of central importance to critical-discursive research are ‘subject positions’ and ‘ideological dilemmas’. A subject position can be understood as ‘a location for persons within a structure of rights and duties’ (Davies & Harré, 1999: 35). Different subject positions can be said to offer different identities, in accordance with whichever particular interpretative repertoire or discourse is being drawn on at the time, (one important implication being that identity is fluid). The notion of an ideological dilemma was developed by Billig et al. (1988) and refers to the idea of ‘lived ideology’, this being the inconsistent and often conflicted common sense beliefs, values and practices of a culture. Critical-discursive research is generally interested in exploring how ideological dilemmas offer conflicting subject positions and what may influence an individual to identify with one position over another.

6.3 The ‘authenticity ideal’

All but one of the participants in this study generally constructed authenticity in extremely positive terms and the sub-sections below will address the range of interpretative repertoires through which this was achieved. The following table provides a brief outline:

<i>Interpretative repertoire</i>	<i>Brief description</i>
The authentic self	The notion of an inner self that one can be true to or not. Often drawn upon in terms of self-awareness (knowing oneself) or self-expression (being honest about one’s true nature).
Authentic emotion	Attributes importance to emotions and may be used to qualify strength of feeling. May also be drawn on in terms of being honest (or not) with oneself and others.
The authentic relationship	Places authenticity outside of the self and offers a way of speaking about and qualifying the value of relationships, e.g. in terms of having a ‘genuine connection’ or a relationship that is freely chosen.
Authenticity as a therapeutic goal	The notion that both client and therapist should strive to achieve authenticity. Furthermore, that therapy provides an ideal environment for doing so.
Counselling psychologists as distinctly authentic	The idea that counselling psychologists are especially authentic in comparison to other mental health professionals. May be drawn upon to support the construction of a distinct professional identity (e.g. as relational, non-pathologising etc).

Table 1: The interpretative repertoires found for ‘authenticity’.

It is suggested here that when taken together, these repertoires form an ‘authenticity ideal’ which may function as both a normative and moralistic discourse within therapy (see discussion chapter). The participant who most problematized authenticity also drew on such repertoires as the ‘authentic self’ and ‘authentic emotions’ (primarily constructing it in terms of self-disclosure), but appeared to give greater weight to an ideology of professionalism and boundaries (section 6.4 below).

As will be demonstrated, the majority of participants used the following repertoires both to establish their identity and legitimize their work with clients. When consideration is given to the humanistic value base of counselling psychology and the participants’ embeddedness within an individualistic Western society (see literature review), it is somewhat unsurprising that authenticity was constructed in such positive terms. However, one finding of particular interest is that in doing so, the participants repeatedly positioned themselves as authentic and their clients as inauthentic. Such positioning might be considered ethically problematic, but it appeared that in drawing upon various psychotherapeutic and humanistic discourses, the participants in this study were distanced from their power in positioning clients this way.

6.3.1 The authentic self

All of the participants drew on this particular repertoire at some point in their interview. Again, such a finding might be expected, for writers such as Guigon (2004) and Potter (2010) have argued that the authentic self is a primary ideal within Western culture. This repertoire is also supported by much psychotherapeutic theory e.g. Rogers’ (1951/1957) person-centred notion of being congruent or Winnicott’s (1965) object-relations notion of having a true-self (see literature review). It may also be said to reflect counselling psychology’s traditional

interest in honouring the subjectivity of clients, as opposed to pathologising via diagnostic categories (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Different aspects of the repertoire were drawn on depending on the purpose of the talk, for example whether the participant was establishing their identity in terms of their inner-self awareness or their honest self-expression with clients. The following quotes will be used to illustrate.

G39:

- 1 **Int:** um so my first question was, what does authenticity mean to you?
- 2 **Par:** Well I guess it's a sense of, genuineness and, a sense of realness within who we
- 3 are =
- 4 **Int:** = mhm.
- 5 **Par:** As I said I, haven't done any reading, about it, relevant to counselling
- 6 psychology but from my experience and how I understand the term it's a sense of
- 7 realness and, sort of being connected to, (.hhh) a genuine sense of yourself.

The researcher's opening question places emphasis on the word 'first', indicating to the participant that more will follow, taking account of the context it is possible that this also calls attention to the expectations being put upon the participant, who begins to respond by providing a list but then stops and issues a disclaimer (line 5). A disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975) is a verbal device that pre-empts potentially negative interpretations, so by saying 'I haven't done any reading...but' the participant defends their comments from possible criticism. The emphasis on the word 'my' (line 6) acts in a similar way, however it might also be said to position the participant as authentic by her own definition, i.e. that her answer is coming from *her* experience rather than from a second-hand and therefore possibly more questionable source. The stress on the word 'sense' in line 2 and its repeated use in line 7 adds

a phenomenological aspect to the account, with authenticity being located 'within' (line 2) and as something that one is 'connected to' (line 7).

A86:

- 1 **Par:** If you're gonna be authentic, you need to know who you are.
- 2 **Int:** Mm hm.
- 3 **Par:** And you need to know where your stuff, ends and theirs begins and vice versa
- 4 and all of that (.hhh) yeah, um because again it's th- that use of self and, I
- 5 always say to people it's not that therapists don't have crap they just know what
- 6 it is.

Here the participant places emphasis on certain key words in order to make the account more persuasive. Authenticity is linked to the notion of self-awareness and an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) is used to strengthen the role that the self plays (lines 5 and 6). This sentence is also interesting because it can be read as positioning therapists as authentic and clients as inauthentic, i.e. that therapist's 'have crap' to deal with too but unlike other people they 'know what it is' (line 6), thus knowing themselves better and being more authentic (lines 1 and 4). By extension the participant establishes her identity as someone who is authentic because she is a therapist.

H61:

- 1 **Par:** to be authentic means that I'm honest that I'm not, I'm not being dishonest =
- 2 **Int:** = mm =

3 **Par:** = I'm not being, um, I'm not hiding behind something I'm not um {cough} I'm
4 : not, wearing a mask, or, um, yeah I suppose I'm ○ not hiding behind something
5 um ○

This quote indicates use of the 'authentic self' repertoire in terms of relating to others and the participant aligns authenticity with the moral discourse of 'honesty', thereby adding rhetorical persuasiveness to the account. The word 'dishonest' (line 2), with an emphasis on the 'dis', provides an extreme case formulation which functions to support the argument via the provision of a negative contrast. By placing emphasis on the word 'dishonest' rather than 'honest', the participant may also be using a form of emotive association (e.g. being 'dishonest' may be linked to being untrustworthy, misleading or fraudulent), again highlighting the value of its opposite term. In line 4 the talk becomes more symbolic as the participant speaks of 'wearing a mask', and as with the word 'dishonest', the use of such imagery may be an attempt to provide a rhetorical account that leaves the speaker impervious to doubt (Sacks, 1995).

6.3.2 *Authentic emotion*

This repertoire fits with Lindholm's (2008) observation that one of the dominant discourses operating in Western society today is that of 'emotivism'; this being the idea that feeling is the most important or real aspect of the self. As with the 'authentic self' repertoire outlined above, the 'authentic emotion' repertoire was commonly used by participants and was drawn on both in terms of people being honest with themselves and with others. However, the majority of participants also qualified the expression of authentic emotion with regard to the restraint considered appropriate to the role of a professional psychologist. This indicates an ideological dilemma that will be addressed in further detail below.

D54

- 1 **Par:** Um, I guess for me it probably has a lot to do with sort of going right back to
2 basics to, with, with congruence I guess, (.hhh) and so, being, real um, in in the
3 room whether that's, I suppose applies to both the client and therapist and I
4 guess I'm, thinking more about it from (.hhh) my point of view =
- 5 **Int:** = yeah =
- 6 **Par:** = um, really, um, and um, yeah being, being real and I guess, sharing what is
7 coming out for you, (.hhh) um sharing what is, sort of what you're thinking
8 maybe, but also the kinds of feelings and emotions evoked and, how they might
9 (.hhh) um relate to, what the client has just brought up I guess.

The participant responds to a question regarding what authenticity means to them by employing the person-centred term 'congruence' (line 2). This can be seen as use of the 'psy-complex' (Parker, 1999), whereby psychotherapeutic language imbues the speaker with expertise and in this case positions the participant as one who is qualified to speak of something she has just described in terms of going 'back to basics' (lines 1 and 2). Interestingly the participant then names both the client and therapist as having the potential to be authentic, but goes on to speak in terms of just the therapist and legitimizes this move by emphasizing that the account reflects her own point of view (line 4). However, whilst this may indicate that the therapist is more easily attributed an authentic subject position than the client, it is also possible that the participant was orientating to the context of the interview and the perceived expectations of the interviewer. For example, the participant was aware that the research title included: 'training and practice in counselling psychology' and the interviewer appears to confirm the participant's choice by stating 'yeah' in line 5. The repetition of the

word 'sharing' in lines 6 and 7 indicates a communicative aspect to the 'authentic emotions' repertoire which is then directly drawn on in lines 8 and 9.

E07:

1 **Par:** she told me about something horrible in her life, and I said, I you know I feel
2 quite affected by what you've just told me, and erm, and erm, you know she,
3 she sort of looked at me and I said you know I'm fine but you know, that's quite
4 you know (.hhh) anyway I made a joke with her once and I sort of said you
5 know when you, tell me that, some of the, very bad things about your life (.hhh)
6 erm, you do it in this like really matter of fact way (.hhh) and, for me, you know
7 that there is there's a sort of lack of congruence I think, you know between, the
8 content and the delivery, and I'm often quite confused by that, d- do other
9 people say that? And she said ↑ oh yes ↓ (.hhh) but one of the things she said
10 helped was, because she did feel deeply sad about certain things upsetting her,
11 and she said she thought I'd helped her sort of normalise, the feelings she has
12 inside but doesn't show to the world.

This participant uses active voicing (Wooffitt, 1992) to present a version of talk as it was. One could argue that this strategy is used in order to create a legitimised and vivid account, which then strengthens the argument that authenticity is related to emotions and plays an important role in therapy. In terms of subject positioning, the participant begins by locating herself as one who authentically expresses her feelings with clients (lines 1 and 2), but then qualifies this by stating (still in an active voice) 'I'm fine' (line 3), which may function to maintain her professional footing. The client is then positioned as inauthentic and it is notable

that this powerful move is framed firstly as ‘a joke’ (line 4), then legitimized via the use of psychotherapeutic language, i.e. ‘a lack of congruence’ (line 7), and followed by an account of the client’s agreement (line 9). The participant is further inoculated against potential criticism via an account of the client thanking her for having normalized her emotional experience (line 11). While it is important to reiterate that the purpose of this analysis is neither to discern the participant’s motivations nor deny the client’s experience of being helped, it is arguable that this extract highlights a common discursive move whereby psychotherapeutic language may act to distance therapists from the implications of a normalizing discourse which positions the client as less authentic than them.

H61:

- 1 **Par:** I was thinking about it with a particular patient that I’m seeing at the moment
- 2 who, is so sort of split from her feelings that she could quite, easily sit for a
- 3 session and just talk, and (.hhh) she’d talk about very moving things, but
- 4 actually her feelings are so split off that actually, it almost feels dishonest =
- 5 = ○ mm ○ =
- 6 **Int:** = the way she talks because, she just, because there’s no connection, there’s
- 7 **Par:** there’s nothing there, so you hear the story, and, there’s something very
- 8 inauthentic unauthentic about, her telling of it, because, she’s telling about her
- 9 brother dying, but actually, there’s no feeling and so you you, it it does feel
- 10 like, ○ you know ○, something is missing, so authentic then for me,
- 11 authenticity it’s something about, (.hhh) being very real, and connecting and
- 12 presenting things, honestly.

This extract provides another example of psychologised language being used to make an account of a client's inauthenticity more persuasive. In other words the participant draws on the 'psy-complex' (Parker, 1999), particularly in terms of psychodynamic language (lines 2 and 4), in order to legitimise her account. The participant's argument is given rhetorical power through the extreme case formulation of a family member's death (line 9) and the inferred 'common sense' expectation that emotion should be displayed when speaking of it. The word 'actually' is used twice and emphasized (line 4) in order to invoke the moral discourse of honesty, whereas the participant's use of the word 'almost' (line 4) can be read as distancing her from the labelling of her client as dishonest. Again, emotive language is evident in the word 'dishonesty', which may be connected to the discourse surrounding the 'authentic self' as well as 'authentic emotions', as indicated in lines 11 and 12.

6.3.3 *The authentic relationship*

This repertoire offers an intersubjective or relational way of talking about authenticity, which was also commonly drawn on by the participants. This may reflect the fact that counselling psychology is often defined in terms of its relational approach, with great importance being attributed to the 'real' relationship between therapist and client (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010).

A86:

- 1 **Par:** coz obviously you also have to deal with, it's not uncommon that have people
- 2 have said well, you're just being paid to be nice to me, and it's getting past
- 3 that, so they know that I, I actually do wanna be in a room with them, and I I
- 4 do want to be with them, and hear them and understand them, I want to, it's not

- 5 because I'm getting my salary, yes I have to do a job to pay my mortgage
6 [but], I'm not in that room with them because somebody's giving me money to
7 **Int:** [○ yeah ○]
8 **Par:** do it, I'm in that room with them because I want to be (1.0) I think that's just a
9 very gradual thing that builds up and people, you can just kind of then feel it
10 it's a mutual thing.
11 **Int:** Yeah, yeah.
12 **Par:** Almost feels like you can't be authentic one sided, I don't know.

Here the participant uses active voicing (line 2) and list construction (lines 3 to 5) to persuade the interviewer about the legitimacy of their desire to be in the room with their client and hence the authenticity of the therapeutic relationship. The list construction is used to provide a two-sided argument (Abell & Sokoe, 1999), with the participant first emphasising a genuine desire to be with the client and secondly the reason why they need to get paid. The admission of needing to pay the mortgage (line 5) can also be understood as a show concession (Antaki & Wetherell, 1999), which protects the speaker from attack or misunderstanding. The interviewer encourages the discussion by providing a 'yeah' (line 7) and a double 'yeah yeah' (line 11), with the speaker repeating their point about wanting to be in the room (line 8) and then explicitly linking this to the notion of a 'mutual' sense of authenticity (line 10). This relational repertoire is interesting for it suggests that the therapist and client might be positioned on a more equal footing than indicated above. However, it is notable that the participant ends her argument with the disclaimer 'I don't know' (line 12), and it is arguable that the commodification of authenticity works against this equality, by attributing additional (monetary) value to the therapist's authenticity.

H61:

1 **Par:** I think, yes it's something about being (1.0) open to looking at what's going
2 on for both the therapist and the patient or client (1.0) yes, so it is that sense of
3 looking at yourself in relation to the other person, I think, and you're
4 encouraging, the client to look at their process in relation to working with you,
5 (.hhh) so I was thinking of somebody that I'm working with, who is um she
6 she actually works as a prostitute, and for her to tell me that was incredibly
7 difficult =

8 **Int:** = o mm o =

9 **Par:** um she really struggled to tell me but she wanted to tell me coz she'd been to
10 some therapy before and hadn't told the therapist (.hhh) and it just meant that
11 they couldn't do anything because it was such an important part of her
12 identity, and the things it brought with it, the shame it brought, the
13 embarrassment, that she carried, meant that she just couldn't work with this
14 therapist because there was this huge part of her that was missing, and when
15 she told me, it meant that I, in a sense and we, talked about her feeling of
16 shame, and embarrassment, and her expectation of being judged and it really
17 made me, think about, my own thoughts about her work, and what she's doing
18 and, her difficulty telling me and, you know am I judging her, was I judging
19 her, what was I thinking about it, my preconceptions and my, stereotypes and
20 the feelings for her, and feelings about the kind of work that she's doing.

In this example, the participant follows up their argument about the relational element of authenticity by narrating a story of working with a prostitute. This functions as an extreme

case formulation, which is interesting in that it attempts to create a vivid contrast between a profession that may not elicit notions of authenticity and the ability for an individual who works in that profession to be authentic in the room. One might argue that this positions the speaker as a powerful figure who helps raise the client from their inauthentic role as a prostitute to an authentic being in the relational encounter. There is also reference to a confessional element of authenticity, as the client could not be whole (line 14) without confessing her profession as a prostitute, and the speaker's 'authenticity' is established by confessing to the interviewer that they had to question whether they were being judgemental. When linked to the previous quote, it is interesting to note the inauthenticity that might be attributed to a commodified sexual relationship, in comparison to the authenticity that might be assumed of the commodified emotional relationship that a person pays to have with a therapist.

G39:

- 1 **Par:** there's also, the extent to which we allow originality (1.0) both parties, both
2 speakers, both roles, but I think (1.0) (.hhh) yeah when one is allowed to be
3 authentic, that means that the other end is also, genuine in themselves, that's
4 how I understand, maybe I'm wrong, maybe this is another, trap, and you think
5 that you're authentic and that this is, corresponding to someone else's
6 originality but in fact they're trying to trap you or, but I don't think so (1.0) I
7 don't think so

Here the participant presents a three-part-list construction (Jefferson, 1990) which formulates how they view authenticity with the client, (i.e. that the therapist and the client enable each

other to be authentic by providing a mutual space for ‘originality’); however, the participant then changes their footing and appears less committed to this concept of authenticity, stating ‘maybe I’m wrong, maybe this is another, trap’. This is what Goffman (1981) refers to as multiple activity footing, and it demonstrates one of the ways in which talk becomes convoluted and variable (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). After the change in footing the participant briefly expands on the alternative formulation (line 6) but then follows this with a disclaimer (‘but I don’t think so (1.0) I don’t think so’). The disclaimer may function to distance the participant from the more ominous explanation and position them as someone who is not being deceived.

6.3.4 Authenticity as a therapeutic goal

Recurring regularly throughout the interview transcripts was both the implicit and explicit assumption that therapists and clients should strive to achieve authenticity. Furthermore, that therapy was the ideal vehicle for realizing such a goal. Participants often spoke of personal therapy having aided the development of their authenticity (indeed this could have been identified as a repertoire in its own right – see discussion chapter), enabling them to help their own ‘inauthentic’ clients to do the same.

C72:

- 1 **Par:** (.hhh) I mean (1.0) I think it’s very important, hugely important, and I think, I
- 2 think it’s so important on many different way-, I think I think, you role model,
- 3 it, so you want your clients to be congruent, and they, are not going to know
- 4 about congruence unless you are being congruent with them, um, I think it’s to
- 5 feel that there’s a real and true connection with somebody, rather than

6 something that that's, um, rather than one that's, that's um, (1.0) that's made up,
7 or or false.

The participant offers two extreme case formulations which leave no doubt about the position they give to authenticity in therapy, (i.e. authenticity is 'very important, hugely important'). They then suggest that therapists model 'congruence' for their clients (line 2), the aim being for them to become similarly congruent (line 3). As noted in the above repertoires, therapists are therefore positioned as authentic and their clients as inauthentic, a positioning that is further demonstrated by the statement that 'clients are not going to know about congruence unless you are being congruent with them' (lines 3 and 4). It appears that the person-centred term 'congruence' functions to make such a statement acceptable, arguably by drawing on a humanistic discourse of self-development which distances the practitioner from the power differential and value judgement involved. There is also the suggestion that congruence and authenticity can be technologised and utilized as a tool within therapy.

H61:

1 **Par:** I think you can, give the appearance on the surface of being honest and
2 authentic, and actually prob- perhaps something that a lot of us do, and
3 actually, what's underneath isn't, and actually I think to be very authentic, both
4 at the surface level and at a deeper level you, do need quite, a good, ○ I don't
5 know if good's the wrong word ○, but you need, to understand your internal
6 world I suppose your inner world, your emotional world, your unconscious
7 world as well, you or you need to be, in the process of examining that ○ I
8 think, and I think, I mean that's ongoing I guess, as well ○.

This participant constructs authenticity as involving a ‘surface level’ of honesty supported by a ‘deeper level’ of self-awareness (line 4), the latter to be achieved via an examination of one’s ‘inner world’ (line 6). A three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) of internal, or core parts of the self (line 6) is used to rhetorically strengthen the idea of an inner authenticity and reference is made to the psychodynamic notion of the unconscious, again implying that therapeutic exploration might be necessary. However, it is possible that the participant is drawing on the psy-complex as a way of appealing to the interviewer, who as a trainee psychologist might be expected to share an immersion in such discourse. It is also notable that this participant appears to position the therapist and client as more equally inauthentic by stating in line 2 that it’s ‘perhaps something a lot of us do’ and adding that the process of examining one’s inner world is ‘ongoing’ (line 8). However, this last line is spoken very quietly, suggesting less conviction. Furthermore, if authenticity is constructed as requiring therapy and counselling psychologists are obliged to undertake personal therapy as part of their training, the implication remains that the therapist will be more authentic than the client.

6.3.5 Counselling psychologists as distinctly authentic

Whilst all the participants can be seen to have regularly positioned the therapist as authentic, several also appeared to draw on a repertoire which identified counselling psychologists as especially authentic in comparison to other mental health professionals. Again this may reflect the ‘relational’ identity of counselling psychology, one that has previously served to distinguish it from that of clinical psychology in particular (Pugh & Coyle, 2000).

A86 – extract 1:

1 **Int:** um, looking back on your, counselling psychology training, what does the

2 word authenticity bring to mind?

3 **Par:** (.hhh) I definitely think it was there and probably more than, as I've heard of it,
4 more than perhaps on say the clinical trainings, [(hhh)] because I think,

5 **Int:** [mm]

6 **Par:** maybe indirectly in the sense of, there was quite a strong sense of the use of
7 self, you know right from the start, you were thinking about how you were in
8 the room, you know, taping yourself and watching yourself and all those
9 horrible things [you] have to do.

10 **Int:** [yeah]

A86 – extract 2:

1 **Par:** I don't wanna be too {laugh} stereotyping about clinicals and counsellings
2 but, (.hhh) I think that's what I valued yeah, that it's more, reflective
3 counselling psychology, and it's all that use of self and process and actually I
4 believe that's, you know and a lot of the research shows that anyway when you
5 look at sort of, over all the studies, the sort of things that are, seem to be most
6 therapeutic, are things like, you know, empathy [and] instilling a sense of hope

7 **Int:** [○ yeah ○]

8 **Par:** [and] being listened to, and so it's fine to, to use the technical stuff, as well as,

9 **Int:** [○ yeah ○]

10 **Par:** but not instead of.

In both the above extracts, participant A86 constructs counselling psychologists as more authentic than clinical psychologists, whilst also drawing on the 'authentic self' repertoire

outlined above. In extract 1 the participant begins their turn by providing an extreme case formulation ('I definitely think it was there and probably more than'), before distancing herself from her ensuing criticism of clinical psychology via the use of a disclaimer ('as I've heard of it'). The description of 'all those horrible things you have to do' (lines 8 and 9) further constructs the identity of a counselling psychologist as one who has earned their authenticity via a distinct and difficult training. In extract 2 the participant begins with a disclaimer ('I don't wanna be too stereotyping'), before again claiming greater authenticity for counselling psychologists because of their reflexive use of self. The participant then claims legitimacy for her argument by drawing on a wider discourse of 'research' and 'studies' (lines 4 and 5), before switching to a more phenomenological framework. This latter part of the extract might be considered an example of counselling psychology's conflicted epistemological foundation working well for a practitioner, who is able to draw flexibly upon a variety of discourses to support her professional identity making.

H61:

- 1 **Par:** um, and I guess, in the sort of the trainings, where you don't have a personal
- 2 therapy I would say that is, that is a a barrier to au- authenticity in that individual
- 3 and those professions, I mean I don't want to, sort of make a sweeping statement
- 4 about all, professions who don't have therapy, you know psychological
- 5 professions but (.hhh) there's something I think there's something in that.

As in the above extracts, this participant also uses a disclaimer ('I mean I don't want to, sort of make a sweeping statement about all, professions who don't have therapy') prior to arguing that counselling psychologists are in fact distinctly authentic. This argument is founded on the

premise that counselling psychology trainees must undertake personal therapy, which by extension positions other professionals and clients who have not had previous therapy as inauthentic. It might even be argued that such rhetoric establishes counselling psychologists as doubly authentic, by virtue of having become authentic through personal therapy, whilst also being a dispenser of authenticity to others via the provision of therapy.

6.4 Authenticity and professionalism / boundaries as an ideological dilemma

As noted above, the majority of participants constructed authenticity as a guiding ideal for practice and personal development, however to varying degrees all also indicated a problematization of authenticity in terms of therapist authenticity and the need for professionalism and boundaries. This conflict indicates an ideological dilemma which participants sought to resolve in a variety of ways, for example by emphasising the role of self-monitoring and awareness, whilst limiting permitted 'authentic' action in accordance with established codes of ethical practice or the approach indicated by a particular psychotherapeutic theory.

B68:

- 1 **Par:** There are boundaries to it, you know, and I suppose the way I, am thinking
- 2 about authenticity is about, being able to respond in ways as a therapist that I
- 3 think are you know, helpful, um, but it, there are differences, s- so I won't self
- 4 disclose exactly, well, yeah, there are different kinds of self disclosure of course,
- 5 wouldn't self disclose about personal matters, but I would give more of myself
- 6 and of what I'm thinking, and feeling, so I do self disclose more in that sense,
- 7 but yeah, there are risks because if that goes too far, or even if it's badly timed,

- 8 you know, badly, you know delivered, it can be risky, I think, yeah, you can go
9 too far with it, get carried away, erm I, yeah, yeah.

In this extract, the participant distinguishes between the authenticity permitted of the client and that permitted of the therapist (line 3). He draws on the notion of self-disclosure to demarcate the limits on the therapist, distinguishing between revelations of personal information and the sharing of thoughts and feelings. However, having established he would self-disclose in the latter sense, he then changes footing and appears less committed to the idea (lines 7 to 9). This is another example of multiple activity footing (Goffman, 1981), again demonstrating a little of the way in which talk often becomes convoluted (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

A86:

- 1 **Par:** = I struggle with, for example, ○ like OCD, I find difficult, coz it just annoys
2 me a bit ○ [{laugh}]
3 **Int:** [{laugh}]
4 **Par:** You know, like for goodness sake stop doing it, (.hhh) and so then it's hard to
5 stay, in my, empathic, congruent, place, coz I just get a little bit irritated.
6 **Int:** Coz there's that bit of you saying {laugh} =
7 **Par:** = yeah =
8 **Int:** = stop it [{laughs}] =
9 **Par:** = [{laughs}], God, yeah =
10 **Int:** = {small laugh}

This extract demonstrates the use of affect displays by both participants, and there is an appeal to emotion discourse (Edwards, 1999) with the participant's admission of irritation. It appears that both parties laugh in order to mitigate the difficulty and potential inappropriateness of the participant's confession. The interviewer's laughter and comments in line 6 can also be understood as collusive encouragement for the participant to continue. This indicates the taboo involved in admitting such annoyance. The ideological dilemma is made particularly clear in lines 4 and 5, where the participant identifies that their irritation may conflict with their normal therapeutic stance.

C72:

- 1 **Par:** when things come up that are difficult, you need to have sorted that lot out for
2 your- out for yourself, or at least put it, be able to put it to one side, erm (1.0)
3 and, it's like, I remember there was somebody on our course, you had a feeling
4 that they wanted, there was a secondary gain they were after, (.hhh) which was
5 about, people, admiring them more, whatever it is, or um, there was one person
6 I know who, had her clients ring her and ringing her up all the time which
7 seemed very, a- across the borders to me, um, ○ she actually failed the course
8 which is interesting ○, but but it's that sort of thing, it's knowing, it's knowing
9 why you're doing what you're doing and having the boundaries very firm there
10 =
11 **Int:** = ○ mm ○ =
12 **Par:** = that it's not about, it's not about your stuff it's, definitely about their stuff,
13 and your own opinion isn't really what, what it's about at all.

The participant's use of an active voice in this extract creates a sense of the narrative serving as a warning. The suggestion is that in order to manage authenticity appropriately you must have 'sorted' yourself out (line 1). The story appeals to another shared taboo within therapy culture, namely boundary breaking, and the example is given of a therapist whose 'authentic' needs and desires eventually lead to her eviction from the profession (i.e. her failing of the training course). The emphasis given to particular words in lines 12 and 13 reiterates the professional stance deemed ethically acceptable. When linked to earlier observations regarding professional socialisation (see literature review) it might be argued that only those who are willing to conform to a particular version of authenticity will receive the necessary state approval to take up the role of therapist. Such conformity may at times create inauthenticity; however, this reflects an ideological dilemma which suggests that inauthenticity may sometimes be more ethical than authenticity.

6.5. Indications of the extra-discursive?

Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007: 107) argue that the understanding people have of themselves is 'structured both by the available discourses in their social milieu and the material conditions in which they find themselves and which offer a range of possible ways-of-being'. In line with such a critical-discursive approach, this research was interested in whether the material conditions involved in training and employment might offer a range of possible ways-of-being in relation to 'authenticity'. The analysis firstly indicated that institutions may play a role in both opening up and closing down particular forms of authenticity discourse, and secondly that embodiment may act as another 'extra-discursive' influence. The following quotes are used to illustrate these findings. It might be argued that they simply represent a range of further interpretative repertoires, however a critical-realist view counters that although a particular phenomenon may be socially defined and produced,

that does not make it any less real (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The relativist-realist debate is an ongoing area of contention within discourse analysis and this issue will be discussed further in the next chapter.

6.5.1 Training and authenticity

As noted in the commentary for the previous quote, it is arguable that training institutions may shape acceptable authenticity discourse quite significantly. This may occur both as a result of the trainee adopting favoured psychotherapeutic theory, or in relation to the conformity required as part of the professional socialisation process.

E07:

- 1 Par: I think once I'd stopped studying it and finished and come out the other end
2 (.hhh) I think I went back to being more authentic, but I think, that three years
3 changed me, (.hhh) and when I first started doing it, it felt like a sort of, bolt on
4 or something and it doesn't now.

This extract seems to suggest that the 'process' of authenticity is stifled through training, and that at least for this participant there was a sense in which their 'authenticity' could only remerge once the training was complete. Referring to authenticity as a 'bolt on' is interesting, as it suggests that authenticity is 'thingified' (Tillich, 1988) and approached as a tool to be developed while training. The participant's comments might also be interpreted as indicative of a successful professional socialisation process, e.g. in terms of having 'changed' the participant and them now feeling that 'authenticity' is a part of them rather than a 'bolt on'.

H61:

- 1 **Par:** Yes, I think, yeah there, there's something about, trying to, (.hhh hhh) (1.0)
2 trying to fit, or trying to fit yourself to the situation, um and so in your training
3 in university that's perhaps, um you know whether that would be in a lecture or
4 in an essay in a piece of written work for example.

This extract again suggests that the trainee's subjectivity is adapted to fit with the educational institution and the participant's sigh in line 1 may be indicative of the potential for this to be oppressive. A three-part list construction (Jefferson, 1990) is used in lines 3 and 4 to add credibility and persuasiveness to the idea that the university requires the student to meet its demands on many levels. Positioned within the wider authenticity discourse of the interview, this extract is suggestive of the process of authenticity not being something that comes from 'within', but rather one that comes from 'without', being either imposed or internalized.

G39:

- 1 **Par:** I can give you um the worst example I can think about myself, being
2 inauthentic if you like, when I had my one of my clinical examinations which
3 I did really well, I presented the piece of work, blah blah blah, and I got a
4 good mark, not perfect, good mark, (.hhh) I was in during the examination I
5 was, so tuned into the examiners' characters which I knew both of them very
6 well =
7 **Int:** = o mhm o =
8 **Par:** I was so tuned into their own if you like, stance, that all of my responses were
9 congruent, with their stances, it didn't necessarily reflect my point of view,

10 and how I saw my client.

11 **Int:** ○ Mm mm ○

12 **Par:** So when I was exploring my client with them, in a way I knew what they

13 wanted to hear, so that's what I gave them, and I got a very good mark, but I

14 was thinking, did I deserve this mark? Probably because it ticked their boxes,

15 but did it tick my boxes? It was because I knew what they like to hear, I knew

16 what their hot topics were.

This extract once again demonstrates a trainee's adaptation to their training institution, whilst clearly illustrating the power differential that makes such an external imposition likely (i.e. the need for a good examination grade). The speaker begins with an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) before presenting a scenario in which their authenticity is stifled. Through the use of active voicing, the institution is positioned as a dominant presence that imposes its own beliefs about what authenticity should mean and takes no account of the speaker's authentic position. The possibility of feeling guilty is identified ('did I deserve this mark?'), perhaps functioning to defend the speaker from potential criticism and enabling them to offer a defence of the grade obtained.

6.5.2 Employment and authenticity

Many of the participants spoke of the restrictions imposed on their practice by employment institutions. These commonly included policies and procedures which clashed with the wish to give clients more sessions or to provide a different therapeutic approach. A number of participants also suggested that the increased favour currently bestowed upon cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) within the NHS limited opportunities for developing client

authenticity. This was attributed to factors such as CBT having a generally short time-frame, practical focus and lesser emphasis on relational learning and personal insight. However, other participants suggested that blame should not be attributed to the CBT model per se, but rather to the institutions that restricted more creative work.

G39:

1 **Par:** so you find pro- professionals who are quite authentic, genuine, (hhh) um kind-
2 hearted people, who are in touch with with themselves, who are real, who are,
3 congruent if you like =

4 **Int:** = o yeah o =

5 **Par:** = (.hhh) and they would likely respect the client and what the client's bringing
6 but then, there's a barrier there because of the service and the rules of the
7 service =

8 **Int:** = o yeah o =

9 **Par:** and that's a general guideline I think, we're not paying attention to clients,
10 we're paying attention to the context and the targets, hence CBT.

The participant starts by using two three-part lists (Jefferson, 1990) in a row in order to present a persuasive rhetorical account of what an 'authentic' practitioner looks like. This is then drastically contrasted with what is considered the 'inauthentic' reality of the NHS, whereby targets are the only measure used, and not authenticity. This argument uses radically contrasted pictures to evoke emotive imagery, e.g. by presenting the authentic as 'kind-hearted' and 'real', whilst the inauthentic is referred to as paying attention only to 'targets'.

H61:

1 **Par:** she talks very openly about, finding it virtually ○ impossible to think about any
2 of these feelings ○, and (.hhh) is slowly very gradually beginning to, sort of let
3 herself feel some of them in our sessions, um, and that kind of raises the
4 question well what what is, you know what's the aim of it, is the aim, you
5 know, to produce this person who, oh produce, I mean to, to help her, you
6 know, connect with them so that she then can present this pers-, herself to the
7 world who is, one self rather than these two and I suppose that is part of the
8 aim, but I guess (1.0) thinking about it in the context of primary care and and
9 short term work that, that is quite difficult it's just ○ perhaps about raising
10 awareness of of what it ○ means to be honest with yourself.

This extract begins with the participant drawing on the 'authentic emotions' repertoire to position the client as someone who is inauthentic but is gradually increasing in authenticity via the therapeutic work. Interestingly, the participant then uses the word 'produce' (line 5), before quickly correcting herself and using the word 'help' instead, this perhaps being indicative of a more benevolent therapist role. The word 'produce' is suggestive of the notion that the psy-complex produces modern day subjectivity (Parker, 1998), and its use may unintentionally indicate something of the discursive or institutional powers at work in shaping 'authentic' identity. The participant similarly uses the phrase, 'she can then present this per-', which she also quickly corrects with a replacement notion that the client can be 'herself' (line 6), thus indicating a more humanistic pre-given subjectivity (as opposed to one that is constructed). The participant then draws on the psychodynamic notion of the split self before

noting that institutional time constraints are likely to prevent therapists from fulfilling their aim of helping the client to become more authentic. This would suggest that short-term work in the NHS may limit the authenticity discourse enacted between the therapist and client.

E07:

1 Par: sometimes in your, with your work hat on you have to say, well, I'm sorry about
2 that, we can only offer, ten sessions, ○ and then you know you can request to
3 have more ○, and, you don't necessarily, agree that that's the right, decision but
4 you have to, erm, implement, what the organisation, erm, > has funding for, has
5 resources for <, whatever, so, it can sometimes be, erm, more difficult I think
6 than, you'd like it to be.

This extract clearly illustrates one of the material ways in which an employer may constrain the authenticity of a therapist, i.e. by limiting the permitted number of sessions for a client. The hushed speech in line 2 might be taken to indicate the speaker's difficulty with not being able to offer the client what they may need from the outset, and the rushed speech on lines 4 and 5 may similarly indicate a sense of unease in having to justify the prioritization of the organization over the client.

6.5.3 Embodiment

Cromby & Nightingale (1999) argue that the 'extra-discursive' includes embodiment and at least half of the participants in this study indicated the possibility of an embodied material influence upon their authenticity talk.

H61:

- 1 **Par:** it's a sense, for me the knowing something is authentic or somebody is being
2 authentic with me is very much about feeling that they are, and it's not
3 necessarily something that I could kind of put into intellectualize, but it is kind
4 of a gut response I suppose, that something's not, hidden or cut off from you, I
5 think.

Here the participant is making a clear distinction between the cognitive and embodied aspects of authenticity (lines 2 and 3), but at the same time it appears as if they are linked, i.e. ‘knowing’ authenticity is achieved through ‘feeling’. This may be indicative of what Uhlmann and Uhlmann (2005: 95) refer to when they state that ‘corporeal reality and its construction in practice are enmeshed within the lived experience of the...body. The construction is neither abstract nor neatly conceptual. It is rather practical and infra-discursive’. These issues will be discussed further in the next chapter, however it is important to note the argument that even corporeal experiences such as the ‘gut feeling’ this speaker refers to may be constructed via social learning and discursive interpretation. For example, in the case of this speaker one could argue that the notion of authenticity as an embodied entity is related to discourse surrounding constructions such as ‘intuition’ or perhaps even ‘countertransference’.

F24

- 1 **Par:** Um ok so my last question [is] could you describe how you might know when
2 **Int:** [mm]
3 authenticity is present?’
4 **Par:** Mm, that’s, you know what it’s a sense, it’s a complete sense, you know when

intuitively as counsellors'. In other words, the psychologist's habitual orientation towards the interior psyche (e.g. in considering beliefs, attitudes, feelings etc), has to be put aside in favour of examining the action orientation of talk. I found that the difficulty of this adjustment was exacerbated by the lack of specific procedural guidelines for conducting a discourse analysis, however as I became more familiar with the data and patterns began to emerge this ceased to feel problematic.

It is arguable that the complex and abstract nature of the term 'authenticity' added further challenge to the analysis. Plus at times it felt unnatural or uncomfortable to be critical of a value so strongly associated with notions such as honesty and truth. This highlights my own embeddedness in a cultural and professional discourse which views authenticity as almost unquestionably 'good'. Indeed it is possible that my immersion within counselling psychology prevented me from identifying discourse that others may have seen more clearly, i.e. perhaps I am too close to the subject matter. However, determining the different discourses at work within a text is never simple, for as Hoskins (2000: 63/64) notes: 'discourse is not a tangible entity that is readily accessible for interpretation – it is elusive, contradictory, and always in motion'. By acknowledging my own positionality, my reflexive accounts have hopefully helped the reader to locate me within the discourses that have framed my seeing (Hoskins, 2000).

Discourse analysis recognises that 'language use may have consequences that the speaker or writer did not intend and may invoke discourses and ideologies of which they may not even have been aware' (Pugh & Coyle, 2000: 87). However to identify such

consequences or ideology carries the risk that participants may feel their views have in some way been misrepresented. An ongoing concern throughout the analysis was therefore to ground interpretation strongly within the data and to evidence decisions via transparent accounting. However, it must be recognised that ‘analysis is inherently subjective because the researcher is the instrument for analysis’ (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1376), and another researcher may well have drawn different conclusions.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The goal of this research was to explore counselling psychologists' 'authenticity' talk at both the micro and macro levels of discourse (Parker, 1997), whilst also attending to the possibility of 'extra-discursive' influences or limitations upon it (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). As such, a critical discursive psychology framework was utilized, the effectiveness of which will be evaluated below. Firstly, however, this chapter expands on the detail of the results chapter and explores the ethical implications of the research findings. This is followed by an assessment of the research limitations, a return to the question of whether it is possible to authentically research authenticity and a discussion regarding possible future research. The chapter ends with a final reflexive account and subsequent review of the overall conclusions.

7.2 The 'authenticity ideal' and counselling psychology

This section will address the interpretative repertoires identified within the present study. It is important to reiterate that these cannot be said to demonstrate the 'truth' about authenticity discourse within counselling psychology, only the researcher's interpretation of the talk that occurred within the local context of the research interviews. However, when considered alongside existing research (e.g. Minnillo, 2008; Vannini & Williams, 2009), the results suggest that an authenticity ideology may operate within the counselling psychology profession, whereby the notion of authenticity is reified and attributed the status of an implicit therapeutic goal.

Following a detailed critical-discursive analysis of the interview texts, five primary interpretative repertoires were identified with regard to the construction of authenticity. These

were labelled: ‘the authentic self’, ‘authentic emotions’, ‘the authentic relationship’, ‘authenticity as a therapeutic goal’, and ‘counselling psychologists as distinctly authentic’. As outlined in the previous results chapter, these repertoires were commonly used to construct ‘authenticity’ in extremely positive terms, with only one participant placing greater emphasis on the main ideological dilemma of authenticity versus professionalism and boundaries (see below). These repertoires were also frequently drawn upon in order to establish the therapist’s identity as one who is authentic, whilst similarly functioning to legitimize therapeutic work by placing the client in the opposite position, i.e. as one who is inauthentic and thus in need of transformation or assistance (see below for a discussion of the ethical implications of this). In light of these points, it is suggested that these repertoires act as an ‘authenticity ideal’ within counselling psychology, or at least within the talk of those who participated in this study.

The repertoire of ‘the authentic self’ was drawn upon by all participants and would appear to reflect one of the primary categories of authenticity identified within Minnillo’s (2008) grounded theory study of therapists and authenticity, i.e. that of ‘personal values and characteristics’. Participants spoke of the importance of self-awareness, of knowing oneself and of being honest about who one was. However, whilst this view of the ‘authentic self’ reflects the current Western culture of individualism (Guigon, 2004), it presents something of a problem for counselling psychology in terms of ontology. For example, if the relational nature of human existence is acknowledged, then there can be no authentic selfhood that is purely ego-regarding (Craig, 2009). Indeed as McLeod (2001) observes, the emphasis that traditional counselling perspectives have placed on individual autonomy is challenged by the view that people are intersubjective beings, who are at least partly shaped and limited by available discourses. This conflict was represented by the availability and use of a separate ‘authentic relationship’ repertoire, which offered an alternative ontological view of

authenticity as something co-created or experienced with another person. However, whilst evident in the talk of most participants, this repertoire was less frequently utilized than that of the ‘authentic self’. The choice of repertoire appeared to depend on the action orientation of the participant’s talk, e.g. whether the participant was seeking to establish their own ‘authentic’ identity, the client’s ‘inauthentic’ identity, or the potential of the ‘authentic’ therapeutic relationship.

The ‘authentic emotions’ repertoire was also commonly used by participants and drawn on both in terms of people being honest with themselves and with others. It might be said to correspond to Minnillo’s (2008) category of ‘authentic meaning making’; this being based on authentic emotional experience and communication. Again, such a repertoire is unsurprising given that ‘emotivism’ (the notion that feeling is the most important or real aspect of the self) is arguably a dominant discourse within Western society (Lindholm, 2008). However, critics of such emotivism have argued that sincerely expressed sentiment may not be ‘authentic’, for whilst authentic emotion must be sincere in the sense of being psychologically real, sincere emotion might not be considered authentic if it does not fit with internally justified values and beliefs (Salmela, 2005). Lindholm (2008: 66) further notes that not only are emotions often ambivalent and contradictory, but ‘turning inward to discover one’s true inclinations has become increasingly difficult as emotions themselves have become marketable items’. Whilst these difficulties were not acknowledged within the interviews, the majority of participants did however indicate the need for some form of limit on the expression of the therapist’s authentic emotion. This indicates something of the ideological dilemma that will be addressed in further detail below

The notion that therapists and clients should strive to achieve authenticity featured as both an implicit and explicit assumption throughout much of the participant's talk. In fact, the repertoire 'authenticity as a therapeutic goal' is intimately bound up with the subject positions made available by the repertoires discussed above. As such, this repertoire is arguably less distinct in its own right, however in the researcher's view it warranted separate consideration. For example, many of the participants explicitly attributed great importance to clients becoming more authentic and there was a distinctive thread of discourse which suggested that therapy was an ideal, perhaps even necessary vehicle for doing so. Most of the participants also spoke of their own personal therapy enabling them to grow in authenticity, the implication being that having experienced such growth they were then positioned to assist clients with the same task. Indeed if space restrictions had allowed, it would have been possible to consider the participants' personal therapy as a separate repertoire, however for the purposes of this study, it is believed to be sufficiently represented here.

Four of the participants also drew on the repertoire 'counselling psychologists as distinctly authentic', there being an emphasis on the therapeutic relationship rather than technique, plus reference to the fact that personal therapy was an integral aspect of training. As previously noted, this may reflect the 'relational' identity that counselling psychology has fostered in order to distinguish itself from other mental health professions such as clinical psychology (Pugh & Coyle, 2000), particularly as each of the participants was employed within the NHS for at least some of their working week. The assumed desirability of authenticity might also be said to reflect a dominant cultural discourse (Potter, 2010) and much psychotherapeutic theory (Wood et al., 2008). Therefore to construct one's identity in terms of authenticity may be to add credibility and strengthen one's position as a plausible alternative to a more medically-orientated profession.

7.3 The ‘authentic’ therapist and the ‘inauthentic’ client

As noted above, the participants in this study drew on the repertoires of the ‘authenticity ideal’ to establish their identity and legitimize their work with clients; however, in doing so the therapist was often positioned as authentic in contrast to the client whose ‘inauthenticity’ placed them in need of the therapist’s expertise. Such subject positioning is ethically problematic in several respects, indicating the operation of a normative and moralistic discourse within therapy.

The positioning of a person as either authentic or inauthentic might first be questioned in terms of the fixed inner subject that it implies (i.e. the ‘real’ self that is being expressed or not). As discussed in the literature review, such a view relies heavily on the notion of individualism and this has been critiqued for its decontextualised and alienated understanding of the self (Russell, 1999). It is also highly questionable how an evaluation of someone’s authenticity might be justified when an action that is authentic for one person may be inauthentic for another. This is further complicated by the fact that it may not be possible for an individual themselves to know if they are acting ‘authentically’. As Thompson (2005: 148) observes:

‘how can we ever know whether we’re being true to our selves or just acting from a convoluted strategy of compliance, on the one extreme, or a not-so-subtle form of narcissism on the other?’

If authenticity cannot be reliably recognised or identified then its use as an explicit value is ethically dubious (Golomb, 1995). Furthermore, it is argued here that to position a client as ‘inauthentic’ is problematic because it identifies them as somehow less acceptable

than the therapist. As Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine (2008: 102) explain, positioning ‘offers not only a perspective from which to view a version of reality, but also a moral location within spoken interaction’. Therefore if authenticity is deemed to be good and inauthenticity vice versa, the ‘authentic’ therapist may be imbued with considerable moral authority. The client may be further disempowered because their ‘inauthenticity’ places them in need of the authentic therapist’s guidance and expertise, rather than giving them footing as an equal co-narrator of the therapeutic encounter. Authenticity discourse may then serve a normative function, as the self of the client is shaped in accordance with a socially approved standard.

The positioning of the therapist as authentic and the client as inauthentic suggests that counselling psychology may function as a ‘technology of subjectivity’ (Foucault, 1980), whereby psychological knowledge and practice are used to constitute a self that can be internally and externally regulated (Heenan, 2006). However, in drawing upon various psychotherapeutic and humanistic (self) discourses, the participants in this study appeared to be distanced from their power in positioning clients this way. While it is suggested here that this is a cause for concern, such a finding is somewhat unsurprising, for it seems unlikely that therapists would knowingly choose to place their clients in a disempowered or normative position. It must also be remembered that discourse is not ‘applied’ to clients in a one-way fashion; there is always room for discursive resistance and both parties will draw on a variety of competing available repertoires as they negotiate their relationship together. It is equally possible that clients draw on authenticity discourse and position themselves as inauthentic in order to communicate their distress in a way that makes sense to them. The discourse that the therapist has absorbed throughout their training and career may then act as filter for the client’s speech and enable the therapist to locate the client’s distress in relation to existing categories within established theories. As such it might be argued that a discourse of

authenticity creates a notion of self that is then able to make use of therapy. However, the normative and moralistic aspects of authenticity discourse suggest that it may be ethically advisable for therapists to develop a greater reflexive awareness of ‘authenticity’s’ constructed nature.

7.4 Authenticity and boundaries – the professional’s dilemma?

Throughout the research interviews, authenticity was constructed as a guiding ideal for practice and personal development; however, it became apparent that this ideal often presented participants with an ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988) in terms of boundaries and professionalism. Whilst one participant argued that authenticity was so important it should always be prioritised, another suggested that this was not desirable within the structured short-term cognitive-behavioural therapy that she offered. The remainder of the participants appeared to favour authenticity whilst still experiencing the dilemma as a significant conflict.

As discussed in the literature review, the notion of authenticity might be said to encourage the therapist to relate in a way that is spontaneous, honest and genuine, this being the common perception of authenticity as a guiding ethic. However, whilst less often acknowledged, it is equally possible that authenticity may encourage behaviour that is selfish, intrusive and demanding. The following quote from Devereux & Coe (2010: 35) neatly summarizes the potential for authenticity to be unethical and sets out a consequent argument in favour of boundaries:

‘Seen from the perspective of the client’s wellbeing, there is a clear danger that the privileging of authenticity is simply narcissistic. Excessive self-disclosure,

expressed sexuality / emotionality, abrupt termination, the imposition of values and the encouragement of dependency are all examples of intrusion into the therapeutic space; whether they are also ‘authentic’ for the practitioner is immaterial. In fact, strong therapeutic boundaries provide the client with a protected space in which anything can be said, safe in the knowledge that the therapist will not act on it’

Viewed from the professionalism/boundaries end of this polemic, it could be argued that inauthenticity is at times more ethical than authenticity; however, it is unlikely that a therapist would wish to position themselves as inauthentic. Indeed it was notable that the participants in this study constructed their approach to such ethical dilemmas (e.g. feeling negatively towards a client) in terms of psychotherapeutic theory (e.g. using the ‘countertransference’) and self-regulation (e.g. in terms of self-monitoring and awareness), whilst limiting ‘authentic’ action in accordance with established codes of ethical practice.

Thus far it has been argued that the authenticity-boundaries dilemma occurs as a function of ethical debate, however the participants’ talk also indicated that such a dilemma may occur as a result of the therapist’s positioning as a professional or expert. For example, on the one hand authenticity discourse permits the therapist to give a client feedback on their way of relating, in a manner that other relationships may not allow, whereas on the other hand the professional role of the therapist indicates that they are not ‘free’ to react to the client as others might, somewhat regardless of provocation. This presents a dilemma that was similarly illustrated in interview research conducted by Morstyn (2002), who concluded that therapists experienced significant pressure to fake sincerity, particularly if they were struggling to feel

empathy for a client. In this sense it could be said that professionalisation legitimizes therapist inauthenticity, whilst the perception of inauthenticity in clients is simply taken to indicate dysfunction.

It is possible that the increased professionalisation of counselling psychology (see literature review) adds further tension to the dilemma between authenticity and boundaries via the positioning of the therapist as a state-regulated expert. For example, while authenticity discourse might indicate that ‘expertise’ disempowers the client by positioning them as a sufferer in need of professional assistance, boundary discourse might suggest that the therapist’s ‘authenticity’ violates the client’s space. Boundary discourse also has a powerful presence within psychotherapy for as House (2003: 52) observes:

‘as soon as ‘boundary-mindedness’ becomes institutionalized within the ‘legitimate’, taken-for-granted discourse of therapy, it becomes extremely difficult even to think in other, non-boundary-obsessed ways about the therapeutic process’.

It is suggested here that authenticity discourse presents one such alternative way of thinking and indeed House (2003) appears to draw upon it himself. However, just as House argues that ‘boundary-mindedness’ is an unproblematic discourse within therapy’s ‘regime of truth’ (Foucault, 1980), this research argues that ‘authenticity’ is the same. This illustrates the powerful yet taken-for-granted nature of this ideological dilemma and suggests the need for a dialogic awareness, as neither discourse offers an unproblematic solution.

7.5 The ‘extra-discursive’

The majority of participants in this study spoke about the difficulty of balancing ‘authenticity’ with the demands of training and employment organisations. Several also talked about there being a physical aspect to their experience of authenticity. Whilst a relativist view would hold that such talk was merely indicative of further interpretative repertoires, a critical-realist perspective suggests that institutional power and embodiment may exist as ‘extra-discursive’ influences and constraints upon discourse (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). Taking the latter view, this research was interested in how the participants might construct authenticity both in terms of the discourse available to them and the ways of being made possible by the material conditions in which they found themselves (Sims- Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007).

The interview data suggests that training institutions may exert a powerful material influence upon authenticity discourse, not only because they encourage particular ways of speaking about authenticity (e.g. psychotherapeutic terms such as congruence), but also because they wield the power to exclude anyone who does not conform to the expectations of the ‘authentic’ therapist role. Ironically, the process of professional socialisation might therefore be said to result in therapist ‘inauthenticity’, this being particularly clear in several participants’ accounts of having to hide their confusion or anxiety when first taking on the role of professional psychologist. Personal therapy was sometimes identified as a separate arena for more ‘authentic’ learning; however, it is also possible to view mandatory personal therapy as part of the professional socialisation process (see literature review).

The present findings also indicate that employment institutions may impact upon the nature and utilization of ‘authenticity’ discourse. For example, several participants proposed that when policy dictates a small number of sessions per client then it limits how much the

work will orientate towards developing the client's 'authenticity'. A number of participants similarly referenced the fact that they were paid to offer particular types of therapy and to meet certain outcome targets. It was suggested that government guidelines and funding criteria lead the NHS and other affected organisations to impose external dictates upon the therapeutic relationship. For some this resulted in a less 'authentic' therapeutic position, however, for others it appeared that such policies and procedures enabled a 'rebellious' stance, with several participants speaking of their attempts to engage authentically despite being unable to work with clients for as long as they wished or within their preferred modality.

In their defence of a critical-realist epistemology, Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007) argue that it enables the researcher to consider why people may draw on particular repertoires because 'the extra-discursive provides the context from which the use of certain discourses is more or less easily enabled' (p.103). For example, it might be said that training institutions greatly enable the discourse of the 'authenticity ideal' and the subject positioning of the 'authentic therapist', whereas certain employment settings may increase the likelihood of discourse which reflects the authenticity-boundaries ideological dilemma. However, such an interpretation must be approached tentatively, for acknowledging the complexity of causal relations and the role of language in constructing social reality means that one can only ever speak in terms of tendencies, not measureable facts (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

The relativist-realist debate is an ongoing area of contention within discourse analysis (see methodology chapter); however, it is arguable that the present findings support the notion that institutional power acts as an extra-discursive influence and constraint upon authenticity discourse. The results also suggest that embodiment might be considered an extra-discursive

factor, in line for example with Gendlin's (2003) argument that bodily experience is a concrete sensing which informs and corrects the words that people choose to express it. However, the interview data is less persuasive in this respect (see results chapter) and if the body is understood to be simultaneously material and textual (Burns, 2006; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; 1968) then it may be inappropriate to privilege it as somehow fixed or separate, as this implies a Cartesian split. Whilst embodiment is itself a contested construct (Wolputte, 2004), Wilde (1999: 28) argues that 'understandings of lived experiences are believed to be separated from our conscious understanding and, thus, require a phenomenological method to reclaim them'. Therefore it is possible that discursive research, at least in the format utilized here, is too disembodied to engage usefully with embodiment as an extra-discursive possibility.

7.6 Limitations

Whilst discourse analysis enables an exploration of the constructive and functional aspects of interview dialogue, there is much debate regarding the extent to which it is actually possible to access anything outside of the text and speak of the 'real' or 'extra-discursive'. Researchers such as Edley (2001a: 437) have pointed out that 'as soon as we begin to think or talk about the world, we necessarily begin to represent', meaning that in epistemological terms 'reality cannot exist outside of discourse'. Others, such as Nightingale & Cromby (2002: 705) counter that 'language is never a perfect mirror of materiality. But this need not entail that we consider it autonomous, transcendent, free-floating and wholly self-referencing; instead language performs flawed, incomplete reference.' Having assumed the latter, critical-realist perspective (see methodology chapter), it is important to acknowledge that the research is still limited by the difficulty of determining exactly what might be considered indicative of the non-discursive or not, (as illustrated by the above discussion regarding embodiment). Speer (2007) in particular has argued that critical-discursive research lacks a systematic method. She

suggests that it suffers from a ‘simultaneous pull towards two essentially incompatible epistemologies’ (i.e. realist and constructionist) resulting in a tendency for the analysis to ‘veer inconsistently between the two’ (p.129). The reader must judge to what extent this appears true for the present study.

It is also important to note that the space limitations of this report mean that a number of potential interpretative repertoires identified within the interview data have not been explored in as much depth as possible. More specifically, it may have been interesting to consider ‘personal therapy’ as a repertoire in its own right or to examine authenticity talk in relation to each of the particular psychotherapeutic modalities. For example, several participants drew on a repertoire of cognitive-behavioural-therapy as pragmatic and time-focused (see results chapter), with some using this to position the cognitive-therapist as less authentic (i.e. less focused on relational learning), whereas others used this repertoire to position the cognitive-therapist as more authentic (i.e. free to ‘be themselves’ and to share motivational or explanatory examples from their own experience). Although such references to psychotherapeutic theory were analysed as part of the ‘authenticity ideal’ (e.g. the ‘authentic relationship’ and the ‘authentic self’), it would be possible to re-analyse the data specifically in terms of how the different modalities were used. One of the participants also drew on a repertoire of ‘mindfulness’ and two spoke in terms of ‘energy’, the latter indicating a possible transpersonal experience or discourse. Again, whilst such talk was subsumed under the ‘categories’ of the ‘authenticity ideal’ and ‘embodiment’, it might be interesting to reanalyse the data and distinguish between them.

Other limitations include general methodological difficulties arising from the use of semi-structured interviews (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). For example, it is possible for the use of

questions and prompts to result in a researcher inadvertently flooding an interview with psychological categories previously deemed of interest. Whilst discursive research holds that interviews always result in a co-constructed account, such flooding may simply lead to the creation of a refined or inverted version of that which was offered in the first place. It is therefore important for the researcher to be mindful of their power in setting the research agenda and the potential for leading participants to adopt a subject position they might not otherwise have held. Such concerns were taken seriously within this study and the reader is directed towards ‘reflexive box 4: power and ethics in the research design’ and ‘reflexive box 5: conducting the interviews’ (see method chapter).

It is hoped that the reflexive accounts within this report have enhanced the ‘validity’ of the research results by contextualizing the researcher’s interpretations (Potter & Wetherell, 1987); however, the participants’ talk must also be contextualised in terms of the interview setting. In other words, it is acknowledged that the participants’ talk will have been unavoidably shaped by the discursive context of the interviews (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). For example, participants’ responses to the interview questions may have included their readings of what might be appropriate for a counselling psychology doctoral research project. This limits the possible transferability of the research findings and suggests that a more ‘naturalistic’ research design may be preferable.

7.7 What now for authentically researching authenticity?

In light of the limitations outlined above, it might be argued that ‘naturalistic’ methods (Potter, 1996) allow for more ‘authentic research’ than approaches based on interviews. For example, whilst a social constructionist view suggests that bias is an unavoidable feature of all interaction (Speer, 2002), ‘naturalistic’ methods, at least to some degree, may reduce the

influence of the researcher upon the gathered data (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). This is not to say that interview data is itself ‘inauthentic’, but that it may be highly reflective of the interview setting, and by giving participants greater power to direct the discourse under study the transferability and usefulness of the research findings may increase.

Polkinghorne (2005: 144) observes that ‘over the years, counselling psychology has accumulated a vast number of recorded psychotherapy and counselling sessions... [creating] a reservoir of data that can serve counselling researchers’. Whilst such research would require careful ethical consideration, a number of discursive studies have successfully made use of recorded therapy (for a review see Avdi & Georgaca, 2007) and this would provide a naturalistic method as argued above. The study of authenticity talk within counselling sessions would also allow exploration of whether the ‘authenticity ideal’ is actually prevalent within the discourse of the therapeutic encounter, thus increasing the ‘validity’ of the present study’s claims about the ethical implications of authenticity discourse within therapy.

Taking into account the findings of this study, it might also be argued that in order to authentically research authenticity the researcher needs to address the possibility of material constraints upon authenticity discourse within the research design. For example, reflexivity was used within the present study to acknowledge the ‘extra-discursive’ influence of institutional power upon the researcher, (such as in reflexive box 3: ‘is it possible to authentically research authenticity within training?’). A similar approach might be taken to embodiment, with both the researcher and the participants perhaps reflecting on their bodily reactions within each interview. Indeed, as Burns (2006: 6) suggests:

‘Within this type of reflexivity, the body and embodiment can be centralized, and

research interviews (and other interactive qualitative data-gathering activities) can be re-theorized as embodied exchanges involving continual interplay.’

It might be argued that such an approach would change the disembodied nature of discursive research (see above) by adding a phenomenological focus; however, if embodiment ‘precedes objectivation and representation and is intrinsically part of our being-in-the-world’ (Csordas, 1994 cited in Wolputte, 2004: 258), then to even speak of it potentially changes it. In other words, once embodiment becomes an object of classification it becomes a part of the ‘non-self’, again implying that the impact of embodiment on authenticity discourse may be extremely difficult to discern.

7.8 Future research

This study focused on exploring how authenticity is constructed and discursively managed; however, building upon the above suggestions, it may be of interest to employ a methodology such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the ‘lived experience’ of authenticity. IPA involves ‘the use of thick description and close analysis of lived experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception’ (Starks & Trinidad, 2007: 1373). Although it may be impossible to fully access that which is pre-reflective (as argued above), such research might still richly illuminate the meaning that people give authenticity in relation to their personal and social experiences.

IPA might also be used as a way of triangulating the findings of the present study. The aim of triangulation is to increase reliability and validity via the application of different research strategies to the same topic of investigation (Polkinghorne, 2005). Whilst triangulation cannot serve to ‘verify’ a particular conclusion, it may enable the researcher to

broaden their perspective and move beyond a single type of interpretation (e.g. in this case discursive). In other words, it may help to achieve a more ‘rounded, multilayered understanding of the research topic’ (Yardley, 2000: 222).

In several respects the findings of this research are very similar to those of Minnillo’s (2008) grounded theory study of authenticity; however, the present results provide a ‘snapshot’ of discourse as utilized within a particular context. In contrast, Minnillo used his findings to develop a theory of authenticity that might broadly explain its development and use within therapy. One of Minnillo’s suggestions was that as therapists spend more time in practice they became ‘more receptive to authentic experiences and confident in expressing their impressions with clients’ (p.77). This ties with the idea that experienced therapists may find a way to ‘be more themselves’ and to manage their anxiety about clients’ reactions more effectively; however, as previously noted (see literature review), this raises the question of whether experience functions to move therapists away from the technologizing of theory towards a more embodied approach, or whether it serves as a vehicle for further professional socialisation and the more wholesale uptake of the ‘authentic therapist self’. For example, it is possible that as therapists become more experienced, the ideological dilemma of authenticity versus boundaries becomes less evident because the ethics of professionalisation are internalized. A longitudinal research design might be used to address such issues, although it may also be interesting to examine the experience of trainees or the discourse that they draw on at various stages of their professional development (e.g. prior to the commencement of training and at the end of their final year). Whilst it is the epistemological view of the author that caution must be applied in terms of making generalizations, such comparative research might illuminate therapist authenticity in new and interesting ways.

7.9 Reflexive box 7

Reflections on reflexivity

It could be said that the purpose of reflexivity is to make more explicit the links between knowledge claims, personal experiences and social context; however, it is often difficult to know how much of oneself and one's experience to include (Hoskins, 2000). For example, when writing the preface (a relatively lengthy reflective piece) I found myself caught between the wish to increase transparency and the fear of providing what may be deemed unnecessary or 'self-indulgent' information (DeVault, 1997). I was conscious of Finlay's (2002a) observation that whilst reflexivity is an important tool for understanding the 'impact of the position, perspective and presence of the researcher' (p.225), such benefits must be balanced against the risk that undue privileging of the researcher's position may act to block the voice of participants or 'skew findings in undesirable directions' (p.541).

Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties with reflexive analysis is that it must take into account the fact that 'our experience is invariably complex, ambiguous, ambivalent' (Finlay, 2002a: 541) and reconstructed in its telling. The writer cannot therefore hope to offer a 'true' or 'complete' account; however, such an acknowledgment invites the previously noted danger of an infinite regress within reflexive writing, i.e. the possibility of spiralling reflection upon reflection, resulting in a meaningless account (Heron, 1996). Difficulties have also been noted with the idea that reflexivity implies the researcher has unproblematic access to his or her motivations and feelings, for if the self is socially

constructed it cannot be pinned down in terms of 'self-awareness' (Seale, 1999). However, whilst acknowledging the unavoidably partial and provisional nature of any reflexive analysis (Finlay, 2002a), I believe that by engaging with the research in this way I have gained new perspectives on the research process and broadened my understanding of the intersubjective dynamics within it. I further hope that the provision of an ongoing reflexive account has added richness to this report and will thus assist the reader in assessing the value of the research.

7.10 Conclusions

This research suggests that 'authenticity' is far more complex, contradictory and context-bound than might commonly be assumed, with the results illustrating some of the ambiguity that lies beneath the surface of its apparently simple virtue. Practitioners are thus invited to raise their awareness of the cultural and historical construction of this taken-for-granted value and its role within counselling psychology practice. It is also suggested that authenticity discourse is used to construct subjectivity in such a way that therapists' may unintentionally disempower and even pathologise their clients. As such, a reflexive awareness of authenticity discourse might be considered essential for ethical practice. However, it is important to reiterate that the comments of the participants in this study were consistent with a range of accepted theoretical and practical guidelines for therapeutic practice, therefore critique falls not on the individuals involved but on the reification of authenticity within the therapeutic industry and the wider society in which it exists.

This research might be considered particularly relevant at the present time, as the widespread implementation of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme may once again require counselling psychologists to define their profession's 'unique-selling-point'. Indeed, it is possible that authenticity discourse may currently hold a strong appeal for counselling psychologists because of the professional niche that a 'relational' identity may provide. Authenticity discourse may also be attractive to counselling psychologists because the profession's theoretical basis is so epistemologically and ontologically conflicted, which added to the anxieties inherent to therapeutic work may fuel a desire for stable ground. The idea that one can 'know' and understand the 'true' nature of oneself and the other is ethically questionable (see literature review) but it supports protective notions of expertise.

Authenticity is a construction that may be used in myriad ways, many of which are arguably of benefit to the therapeutic project. For example, in drawing on the 'authenticity ideal' the individual is encouraged to be honest with themselves and others, whilst striving to actualize their potential. Indeed, the authentic self is a theory which could be said to provide a location for moral agency, enabling self-reflexive discourse and encouraging personal accountability. It is unlikely that any therapist would argue with the positioning of the individual as unique and valuable in their own right and Hansen (2006) suggests that if used flexibly, theoretical notions (such as authenticity) can helpfully provide clients with different vantage points from which to 're-story' their experience (p.293). However, the notion of authenticity firmly locates therapeutic action within a humanistic moral discourse of self-unity, leading critics to argue that 'striving for authenticity overemphasizes the value of the self relative to community and consequently narrows peoples' lives by making them poorer in meaning' (Lewin & Williams, 2009: 66).

This research resonates with Christopher's (1996) argument that Western counselling theories so greatly presuppose individualism that it operates implicitly and functions as 'disguised ideology' (Fowers, 1993). This holds several ethical dangers for it is arguable that an emphasis on the individual authenticity of clients may detract attention from social and cultural problems, allowing the state to escape responsibility for alienation and inequality. Indeed, Proctor (2006) suggests that psychotherapy can find itself an unwitting accomplice, mopping up the mess left behind when powerful state forces make choices that damage people. As Cushman warns (1990: 599):

'if psychologists do not recognise the ethnocentric nature of psychology's discourse about the current Western self, we commit several errors. In particular, we participate in a culturally disrespectful and damaging psychological imperialism... [and we] perpetuate the discourse of self-contained individualism and its attendant miseries.'

By taking a critical position this research challenges the contemporary regime of psychological truth and invites practitioners to think differently about authenticity. It suggests that therapists may do well to acknowledge their own inevitable 'inauthenticity' and it calls for caution regarding the 'inauthentic' positioning of the client. It is argued that authenticity is an evaluative term, with a culturally assigned meaning that is open to different kinds of interpretation; however, this research also indicates that authenticity discourse may be shaped by institutional power and possibly the embodiment of the individual. It is concluded that this holds implications for training, not only in terms of acknowledging the above points, but also in emphasising the importance of teaching students about the historical and cultural context of psychological theory. It may also suggest a greater role for developing embodied awareness. Ultimately however this research calls for greater reflexivity regarding the values that

underpin counselling psychology practice. It supports House's (2003) argument that ethical practice demands an ongoing and deconstructive interrogation of therapy, its 'professional' ideologies and clinical activities. It is not suggested that current values are without worth, or that therapists might somehow step outside the influence of their culture, rather this thesis is offered as an attempt to critically reflect upon a particularly taken-for-granted value, arguing that perhaps such notions are in need of more regular review.

Appendix A:



RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

Research Title: Authenticity, training and practice in counselling psychology.

Thank you for expressing an interest in this research. I hope that the following information will help you in deciding whether or not you wish to participate. If you have any questions that are not answered here, please do not hesitate to contact me.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research aims to explore counselling psychologists' views on authenticity, with reference to both training and clinical practice. There is much current debate regarding the nature of counselling psychology as a profession, this research aims to contribute to that debate by exploring the use of this well-known yet ambiguous concept.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?

I am hoping that by talking to you it will be possible to understand more about the concept of authenticity and its place within counselling psychology. By participating in this research you will have an opportunity to reflect on what authenticity means to you, to discuss your training and development as a therapist, and to contribute to debate regarding the values that underlie our profession. Out of this I hope to write up the findings for my doctoral dissertation.

What will taking part involve?

I would like to interview you for approximately one hour. I will arrange to visit at a time and place convenient to you. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcription will then be read and explored using a qualitative methodology and the findings will form part of a doctoral thesis, which will be a publically available document. The data may also be used in part or as a whole in future publications. This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Roehampton University.

What about anonymity and confidentiality?

I will ensure your anonymity by coding your transcript with letters chosen at random and by excluding all identifying information (names, dates, places etc) from the transcription, using pseudonyms where necessary. The anonymity of any clients you discuss will also be respected. My research supervisors and/or examining board may request to read the coded interview transcripts, however I will be the only individual with access to any identifying/contact details provided. At the completion of the project there will be no reference to your identity in any of the findings.

You will also be given the choice to receive a copy of your transcribed interview to look over and approve before I begin the analysis. This is to ensure that you agree with the transcription and will provide an opportunity to revisit what was discussed in the interview if you wish to do so.

All data and documentation from the interview will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to which only I have access. In accordance with University policy, data will be kept for six years, after which time it will be destroyed. Confidentiality will be maintained in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009).

What difficulties may arise from participating?

During the course of the interview it is possible that you may uncover sensitive issues which you would like to discuss further. There will be time available after the interview in which to debrief and following this you are free to contact me by telephone or email with any additional questions you may have. I will also provide you with details of organisations you can contact if you do experience any emotional distress as a result of the research process.

Right to withdraw:

The interview will be semi-structured and you may choose not to answer any question that you are uncomfortable with. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time during or after the interview, without needing to give a reason. At the end of the interview you will be given a debriefing information sheet containing the ID number allocated to your data. This number can then be quoted if you wish to withdraw from the study in future. Withdrawal means that all individual quotes and examples provided by you will be removed and your interview recording and transcript will be destroyed. However, please note that the composite nature of the data analysis process means that the later a request for withdrawal is made, the more difficult it will be to remove the essence of a contribution, which may result in some data remaining in aggregate form.

I would like to participate, what do I do next?

Please contact me, preferably by email. We can then agree on the practical arrangements, such as when and where to meet. I will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. I will then email you a Consent Form outlining how I will use your material, which I will ask you to sign and return on the day of the interview.

Many thanks for your time; I look forward to hearing from you.

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Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise them with the investigator, or the Director of Studies. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School.

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Appendix B:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Authenticity, training and practice in counselling psychology.

Brief Description of Research Project: This research aims to explore counselling psychologists' views on the concept of authenticity, with reference to both training and clinical practice. The intention is to consider what positions counselling psychologists take regarding authenticity and what implications these might have for practice. It is hoped this will contribute to debate on the nature of counselling psychology as a profession. Interviews will last an hour and will be audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis.

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Consent Statement:

I have read and understood the Recruitment Information sheet and I agree to take part in this research. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the interview or the study as a whole, at any time and without giving a reason. I am aware that the composite nature of the data analysis process means that a late request for withdrawal may result in data remaining in aggregate form.

I agree to the recording and transcription of interview data. I understand that in order to ensure my anonymity the investigator will exclude any identifying details and use pseudonyms. I give my permission for anonymous quotations to be used in the final research report and any subsequent publications.

I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator. I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and that these have been answered. I understand that the research is being conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009).

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise them with the investigator, or the Director of Studies. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School.

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Appendix C:

DEBRIEFING INFORMATION

Research Title: Authenticity, training and practice in counselling psychology.

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Debriefing Statement:

Thank you for participating in this research. Your time and input is much appreciated.

I'm aware that speaking about authenticity may be challenging and could provoke difficult feelings. Therefore I would now like to offer some time in which we can discuss anything that has arisen for you. Please feel free to comment and ask questions. If you should think of anything later, I will be available by telephone or email (details as above).

If you feel distressed or wish to discuss in greater depth any issue that has come up within the course of the research, then you may wish to raise the issue in your next personal therapy or supervision session. Alternatively you could contact one of the following organisations for support, (each website provides a list of therapist contact details):

The British Psychological Society:

www.bps.org.uk or 0116 254 9568

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy:

www.bacp.co.uk or 01455 883300

The United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy:

www.psychotherapy.org.uk or 0207 014 9955

This research is of a qualitative design and interview transcripts will be explored using Discourse Analysis. It is anticipated that the completed thesis will be accessible via The British Library and Roehampton University library later this year. If you would like to be

informed of the research findings, let me know and I will be happy to provide a summary once available.

You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason. If you would like to withdraw please contact me as detailed above and quote the ID number given at the top of this form. I will then remove all individual quotes and examples provided by you and your interview recording and transcript will be destroyed. However, please note that the composite nature of the data analysis process means that the later a request for withdrawal is made, the more difficult it will be to remove the essence of a contribution, which may result in some data remaining in aggregate form.

Declaration:

I confirm that the interview was conducted in an ethical and professional manner and that I am happy for the research to proceed using my material:

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of investigator:

Signature:

Date:

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise them with the investigator, or the Director of Studies. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School.

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Many thanks again for your time and assistance.

Appendix D:**SUMMARY TABLE OF PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Place of work</i>	<i>Clinical experience</i>
Female	White British	NHS	7 ½ years
Female	White British	NHS + private practice	7 ½ years
Female	White Other	NHS + private practice	3 ½ years
Female	White British	NHS + private practice	23 years
Female	White British	NHS	3 ½ years
Female	White Other	NHS (via private sector) + private practice	6 years
Male	White British	NHS + private practice	4 years
Female	White Other	NHS	4 years

Appendix E:

THE PILOT INTERVIEW

Why conduct a pilot study?

According to Sampson (2004), a pilot study has many benefits and should be considered an essential feature of the research process. Advantages include having the opportunity to test out the practicalities of location and timing, assess validity, identify research problems or gaps in the data collection, and to become familiar with the particular data gathering task at hand. The primary aim of the pilot for this research was to test the interview questions and provide the researcher with some concrete experience of interviewing.

How were the questions generated?

The interview questions were generated from a consideration of the research rationale. For example, the first aim of the research was to simply explore the ways in which authenticity is constructed, thus indicating the use of an open question regarding what authenticity might mean to the participant. It was decided that such a question might also function well at the beginning of the interview, by allowing the participant to set out their initial understanding of the research topic.

A further aim of the research was to explore how training and paid employment might offer particular ways-of-being in relation to ‘authenticity’, which counselling psychologists might then appropriate (Willig, 1999a). It therefore seemed appropriate to ask a question for

each of these two areas, i.e. what authenticity brought to mind in terms of their training experience, and similarly what it raised in terms of their work experiences. In seeking to address the ‘extra-discursive’ and explore whether there were any other material constraints on authenticity discourse, it also seemed apt to ask a question about whether there were any barriers to authenticity, and conversely how they might describe when authenticity is present.

Prior to the pilot interview, the researcher went through a repeated process of brainstorming additional questions and then assessing their potential for inclusion in the interview schedule. For example, two such questions were:

- What are your views on self-disclosure and authenticity?
- What does the term ‘real-relationship’ mean to you?

However, these and other such questions were dismissed as unnecessarily leading. Eventually two subsidiary questions were settled upon:

- Can you describe a time when you have experienced authenticity / inauthenticity with a client?
- Has anything ever happened to you that has impacted on your sense of being able to be authentic or not with clients?

Who took part?

A single interview was conducted with a female counselling psychologist, previously known as an acquaintance to the researcher. It was decided that a further interview would not be

necessary, the pilot having been a success.

What was the procedure?

The same procedure was followed as outlined in the method chapter of this thesis.

What was the outcome and how did this inform the final interview schedule?

The pilot study was very helpful and it demonstrated that only a small number of questions were necessary to open up discussion and fill the allocated hour. The introductory question about meaning and the questions about training, barriers and authenticity being present, all worked very well. However, it was realised that the question about experiences in employment was somewhat unnecessary because such material was being drawn on throughout the responses to the other questions. An alternative question was therefore developed that was less prescribed whilst also inviting evaluation (i.e. what place does authenticity have in practice?).

In terms of the subsidiary questions outlined above, it was again realised that a question about the experience of authenticity or inauthenticity with a client, was probably unnecessary as such references were likely to be made in answer to other questions. However, the question about anything having impacted upon the participant's sense of being able to be authentic or not, was trialled in the pilot and then dropped from the final interview. This decision was made on the basis that although the question was well received and actually

generated interesting data, the researcher felt that it was potentially intrusive and therefore unethical.

The final interview schedule consisted of five questions in total. It started with the general introductory question which asked the participant (i) what authenticity meant to them, and was then followed by (ii) what authenticity brought to mind in terms of their experience of counselling psychology training and (iii) what place authenticity has in practice, (iv) whether there were any barriers or difficulties relating to authenticity and (v) how they might describe when authenticity is present.

Appendix E:

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

○ ○	encloses speech that is quieter than the surrounding talk
CAPTIALS	represents speech that is louder than the surrounding talk
↑	indicates rising intonation
↓	indicates lowering intonation
(1.0)	defines a pause length in seconds
> <	encloses speech that is faster than the surrounding talk
< >	encloses speech that is slower than the surrounding talk
:::	represents an extended sound
<u>Underline</u>	indicates stress/emphasis
-	marks when a word is broken off
(.hhh)	shows an in-breath
(hhh)	shows an out-breath
()	encloses words that are not clearly audible
[]	indicates overlapping speech
{ }	contains clarification, e.g. tone / gesture / laughter
=	marks the immediate continuance of successive talk, with no interval
?	indicates an upward intonation characteristic of a question

The above notation system is based upon those used within two critical realist discursive studies by Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig (2007) and Wetherell (1998), both of which were primarily derived from the transcription conventions developed by Jefferson (1985).

A comma has been used to code pauses of less than one second. The researcher took the position that the current research would not gain from measuring pauses of lesser duration (as might be the case in a study focused solely on the level of conversation analysis).

Appendix F:

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Interview 5: H61

[Start of recorded material]

- 1 **Int:** Ok, um so my first question is what does authenticity mean to you?
- 2 **Par:** Um, I've been thinking about this quite a lot and, I, not really sure what it means
- 3 and then, as I was walking to work the other day there's a restaurant and it has in
- 4 big letters, on the side, authentic cuisine, and then it says authentic cuisine Italian
- 5 Indian Chinese and Mexican, and I, remember looking at it and thinking well how
- 6 can you be authentic to everything, and then it said authentic chefs, and I was
- 7 thinking well that means, that must mean they're, you know real Mexicans or real
- 8 Indians or real Chinese people cooking (.hhh), and it made me think about, well
- 9 it's something about real, and it's something about, honest, and I think the word
- 10 honest is the one that sort of stuck in my mind that there's something about (.hhh)
- 11 authenticity, authentic, being, about being honest and whether that's, you know in
- 12 that food sense it came to me well that means the food is, is kind of genuine, it's
- 13 like people in Mexico would eat, do eat, and then for me, to be authentic means
- 14 that I'm honest that I'm not, I'm not being dishonest =
- 15 **Int:** = mm =
- 16 **Par:** = I'm not being, um, I'm not hiding behind something I'm not um {cough} I'm
- 17 not, wearing a mask, or, um, yeah I suppose I'm ○ not hiding behind something
- 18 um, ○ and I mean I was thinking trying to think about it in, sort of different areas
- 19 of my life in terms of sort of me as a person as an individual and me as a, in
- 20 practice and in theory and I mean, shall I just, keep [talking?]

21 **Int:** [mm yeah]

22 **Par:** So I was thinking in (.hhh) in practice I was thinking about it with a particular

23 patient that I'm seeing at the moment who, is so sort of split from her feelings that

24 she could quite, easily sit for a session and just talk, and (.hhh) she'd talk about

25 very moving things, but actually her feelings are so split off that actually, it almost

26 feels dishonest =

27 **Int:** = o mm o =

28 **Par:** = the way she talks because, she just, because there's no connection, there's

29 there's nothing there, so you hear the story, and, there's something very

30 inauthentic unauthentic about, her telling of it, because, she's telling about her

31 brother dying, but actually, there's no feeling and so you you, it it does feel like, o

32 you know o, something is missing, so authentic then for me, authenticity it's

33 something about, (.hhh) being very real, and connecting and presenting things,

34 honestly. Being honest with yourself I think, um, and I think that, I've really no-

35 I've really been sort of aware of that particularly with her because it's so clear,

36 and she's also, she's very aware of it, she talks about, o you know o she talks

37 very openly about, finding it virtually o impossible to think about any of these

38 feelings o, and (.hhh) is slowly very gradually beginning to, sort of let herself feel

39 some of them in our sessions, um, and that kind of raises the question well what

40 what is, you know what's the aim of it, is the aim, you know, to produce this

41 person who, oh produce, I mean to, to help her, you know, connect with them so

42 that she then can present this pers-, herself to the world who is, one self rather

43 than these two and I suppose that is part of the aim, but I guess (1.0) thinking

44 about it in the context of primary care and and short term work that, that is quite

45 difficult it's just ○ perhaps about raising awareness of of what it ○ means to be
46 honest with yourself =

47 **Int:** = mm =

48 **Par:** = (.hhh) and I think for me, that perhaps is something that has come up in my own
49 therapy as well in terms of being, honest with myself about how I feel, um, and I
50 think that (1.0) so for example, {name}, my husband {name} is away a lot, so he
51 works four weeks away four weeks at home and > I find that very difficult and
52 I've always found that very difficult < (.hhh) and I've always been very clear that
53 I found it difficult, but I've, I used to not really be terribly clear about what I
54 found difficult and how it affected me and I think that was partly you know, me
55 splitting that off myself =

56 **Int:** = mm =

57 **Par:** = and, I would see people um my parents particularly when he was away I'd get
58 angry with them, (.hhh) {smiled} and actually, in the therapy we spent I spent a
59 lot of time thinking about, what actually are the real feelings, you know what what
60 actually, why do I get angry with my parents particularly and (.hhh), and actually
61 once I could, I think accept, my own neediness, that I'm lonely, or I'm sad, that I,
62 resent the attention the work gets rather than you know I get, and once I could
63 actually accept that then I, could, ask for help, so I could sort of say to friends
64 look {name}'s going way, can, you know can we do something? Can I come over,
65 [can I] stay? Whatever, and actually, to then, be able to be honest about that with

66 **Int:** [mm]

67 **Par:** them, in a way that I hadn't, and I think that allows me to feel, that I am being
68 authentic I suppose, I'm being, I'm not being dishonest either with myself or with
69 them, um =

70 **Int:** = So there's almost, a surface level which is about honest communication =

71 **Par:** = Yes

72 **Int:** But for it to be something really authentic there's this underneath, something

73 which is about being honest with yourself, mm?

74 **Par:** Yes, Yes, and I think, I think you can, give the appearance on the surface of being

75 honest and authentic, and actually prob- perhaps something that a lot of us do, and

76 actually, what's underneath isn't, and actually I think to be very authentic, both at

77 the surface level and at a deeper level you, do need quite, a good, ○ I don't know

78 if good's the wrong word ○, but you need, to understand your internal world I

79 suppose your inner world, your emotional world, your unconscious world as well,

80 you or you need to be, in the process of examining that ○ I think, and I think, I

81 mean that's ongoing I guess, as well ○.

82 **Int:** So there's definitely a sense of, it's about what is internal in our psyche, and as

83 best we can knowing, what that is?

84 **Par:** Yes, yeah I think so, (.hhh) I think so and as you, said that I was thinking

85 about the, the psychodynamic ideas of counter-transference, and actually being

86 allowed and being able to say I don't like this patient, this patient makes my skin

87 crawl, this patient makes me feel really, uncomfortable, and actually ○ I really

88 don't like them ○, rather than feeling that you have to say, you know, I'm trying

89 this, just I'm finding this work difficult or I'm finding this patient difficult but ○

90 you know I like them as a person ○, is actually, it's it's difficult, it's not easy at all

91 I think.

92 **Int:** Mmm. So to be truly authentic in your, even just in your client [work] is, difficult

93 **Par:** [yeah]

94 **Int:** because it may mean owning things like that.

95 **Par:** Yes, yeah and I think that, is that sense of being honest with yourself, with, the
96 feelings that you you are owning, I suppose (.hhh) the really difficult feelings the,
97 the feelings that, (.hhh) yeah the feelings that are difficult to own, and it's not
98 necessarily about, you know those, I suppose to present then an authentic self to
99 the world it's not necessarily about, all those feelings kind of spilling out =

100 **Int:** = mm mm =

101 **Par:** = but it's about, you having some, ○ understanding of them, and understanding
102 how they're influencing your, your work or your context, your, I think
103 relationships I [suppose], yeah ○.

104 **Int:** [mm mm], So to be authentic with clients in that example
105 if you didn't, if you didn't like a client say, it wouldn't, necessarily be about,
106 saying it as such but it would be owning, or understanding it?

107 **Par:** Yeah, I think so, I mean I, (.hhh) I was thinking I mean I haven't, I don't think I've
108 really working with somebody where (.hhh) where I've, oh I suppose that's about,
109 > that (comes into the thing there's sort of) something about self-disclosure (I
110 think) there <, I mean I {sniff}, thinking about a client that I worked with who I
111 really didn't like and I just, he did make my skin crawl, (.hhh) and I knew there
112 was something going on and I couldn't on my own kind of work out, I knew he
113 reminded me of somebody I'd, I'd gone out with years ago and there was
114 something in that reminder that made me, find the work very difficult, find him
115 very difficult and find him very (1.0) um, er almost, almost like when he came in
116 the room I kind of felt contaminated (.hhh) and, I knew I needed to understand
117 that because without understanding that I couldn't, I couldn't ↑ work ↓ with him
118 really, I couldn't I was, of very, kind of limited use I wouldn't have be-, you know
119 I was, yeah I couldn't really have worked with him, um so I knew I had to take

120 that to therapy and, really think about, er, this relationship, that I'd had that, was
 121 very up- painful and upsetting to think about and what it was within that, and this
 122 patient and (.hhh) and how it all came together, and, it wasn't necessarily yes
 123 about saying to him, actually I don't like you, because it wasn't actually about not
 124 [liking him], it was about, not liking what he reminded me of, and actually once I
 125 **Int:** [o mm o]
 126 **Par:** could think about that, it became, yeah it became clear to me that it wasn't about
 127 liking him, or it wasn't about not [liking him] it was about, my feelings and once I
 128 **Int:** [o mm o]
 129 **Par:** could, own my feelings and be in the room with him, realizing that they were
 130 mine, and that I could be honest with myself about those feelings, I suppose then,
 131 I was able to be, more authentic with him, I suppose, [again] I think the word, I
 132 **Int:** [mm]
 133 **Par:** guess the word (1.0) o is it how o yeah there's something about how you use it
 134 [as well], it's um.
 135 **Int:** [mm] You can use it in different ways [like you were saying]
 136 **Par:** [Yeah]
 137 Yeah coz you know, was I authentic with him? I mean would it, you know how
 138 how do I know, that I was actually authentic with him.
 139 **Int:** (1.0) It sounds like there's something about this, this aspect of authenticity which
 140 is, about, being reflective and, honest with that =
 141 **Par:** = yes =
 142 **Int:** = that sounds important?
 143 **Par:** Yes, I think it is and I think it is, that process of reflection and that process of, of
 144 honesty and, being able to look at yourself and look at what's going on, you know

145 in pra- in clinical work, being able to look at what's going on in the room with the
146 patient, look at the relationship, look at, (.hhh) the experience, look at your own
147 feelings, um, and, really, not be afraid of examining them I suppose, um, if you do
148 want to be, real I suppose, um (2.0) yes I think that's, I think that's it, it feels
149 important to be real, and, I think, I can, see a difference in my personal
150 relationships, having had therapy, I had, a therapist I worked with, for sort of two
151 and a half years, over the course of training and, sort of, over the following
152 months =

153 **Int:** = mm =

154 **Par:** = (.hhh) who, I think, that's something actually we've really worked on, not
155 always kind of in an overt way, an explicit way, but it it's been underlying a lot,
156 that there is this sense of being, being real, um and, and > actually I can see that
157 my relationships are a lot better for it, < I really can, I mean my relationships with
158 my parents, which has always been good, but I felt had been strained for quite a
159 few years, is a lot better, and I think that's because I, am able to be, more real with
160 them =

161 **Int:** = mmm =

162 **Par:** = um, and I think that is, I mean that's through therapy, that's through, having a
163 chance to explore that and, and so on, and I think, yeah I can see that in a lot of
164 different relationships, um.

165 **Int:** So that stands out the personal therapy, um has played a significant, role, in in you
166 having this sense of being able to be more real?

167 **Par:** Yes, I think so and I think, yeah, I think it, it I was just thinking that (1.0) it's
168 something about, {tut} because I don't even know I don't know if it's necessarily
169 that I've been, most real with my therapist, I mean I think there's, you know I

170 have, found it difficult to always be completely open with her, and you know to
 171 be really, not honest, it's not that I've lied, but I'm pretty sure I've held things
 172 back, (.hhh) but I think, I've also been aware of doing that, and I think that there's
 173 something in that =

174 **Int:** = o mm o =

175 **Par:** = in as much in the process of being aware of holding something back as there is,
 176 as actually being completely open, um (1.0) and so I do wonder about that, um
 177 (1.0) and um what, you know how that effects, or how what impact that's had on
 178 my process =

179 **Int:** = mm =

180 **Par:** = Um, o yeah o.

181 **Int:** (.hhh) that kinda ties in with something I wanted to ask which was about (1.0)
 182 what, wh-, what comes to mind for you in terms of training [and authenticity]?

183 **Par:** [mmm]

184 I think, different things at different times. I think, when I think back to me in, the
 185 first year of the training, I think I see myself as very different from now, because,
 186 I was quite overwhelmed, I think, I was quite, I was terrified to be honest by it, I
 187 think, I mean I hadn't I didn't really, I had a good solid understanding of
 188 psychological theory, but I didn't have a very good understanding of counselling
 189 theory, or the theories, that we were looking at or the, (.hhh) not in the detail
 190 depth in any way, and I felt overwhelmed, and I felt, I suppose out of my depth,
 191 and, I felt, like I needed to be, showing quite a professional, you know se- sense,
 192 and, (.hhh) the thing that always stands out to me, is one of the lecturers, {name of
 193 lecturer} saying something like you're a bit like a duck, you know you're on the
 194 surface you look like you're gliding and underneath actually your legs are

195 furiously paddling, (.hhh) and there was something about that actually has really
196 stuck with me, because, is, that feels very inauth- inauthentic, you're present, what
197 you're presenting to the world actually is very different, but somehow she'd seen
198 that, erm, and I think, that meant a lot to me, because I think it felt like the first
199 time anybody had really noticed that, and, I think, her noticing that allowed me
200 perhaps to try and, do it or to feel it was ok to, to show that I was struggling, and I
201 think that training is difficult though, because on the one hand you're encouraged
202 to be very open about your process, and (inaudible word) and on the other hand
203 actually, there's also this sense, well it's a doctorate you should be able to manage
204 get on with it, and I think, that presents you with quite a difficult dilemma in a
205 [way].

206 **Int:** [Mm] that's a dilemma about authenticity isn't it, [and] it sounds similar to, what

207 **Par:** [○ yeah ○]

208 **Int:** you were saying about, you're trying to be professional, you're taking on all these
209 [skills], um and presenting a certain way, whereas actually underneath, perhaps

210 **Par:** [yeah]

211 **Int:** feeling very overwhelmed, [and], and then there's something yeah of a conflict

212 **Par:** [yeah]

213 **Int:** for authenticity [there].

214 **Par:** [yeah], because you're, you're trying to be, this professional
215 person, but actually underneath, I felt like a complete (.hhh) fraud I suppose, um,
216 and I still feel it sometimes I've got quite a long corridor to walk down at work,
217 from where I pick the, where I meet the clients, to the room, and I know it, as I
218 walk down that corridor (with them behind), I sometimes feel like, a fraud, and,
219 and I have to say to myself but you're not, a fraud, you're not pretending to be

220 something you're not, you're, you're here in this capacity because you can do the
 221 job, and, it's only on that walk. I don't quite know, I think maybe, maybe it's
 222 something about, (.hhh) maybe it something about boundaries as well actually,
 223 [because], that walk does mark the boundaries of the room, and I've got one,

224 **Int:** [◦ mmhm ◦]

225 **Par:** client particularly who always, sort of starts making kind of small talk
 226 conversation and I find it immensely difficult =

227 **Int:** = ◦ mm ◦ =

228 **Par:** = because I don't want to (1.0) start chatting about the weather, because that feels,
 229 I suppose in a sense it feels kind of dishonest, because that's' not what we're here
 230 to talk about and, so I think perhaps the university, the training, it puts you
 231 through some very difficult experiences in that sense of feeling a conflict between
 232 being real and authentic and, your authenticity, you're trying to, trying to develop
 233 I suppose, and trying to, show and trying to, well yeah trying to develop for
 234 yourself I think and, it put, it challenges it [immensely] I think.

235 **Int:** [◦ mm ◦]. So at the
 236 same time as trying to develop greater authenticity in yourself, to know yourself
 237 [better] and this sort of stuff, um, you're having to be quite inauthentic because of

238 **Par:** [yeah]

239 **Int:** the system in a way? =

240 **Par:** = Yes =

241 **Int:** = And it sounds like in, in some ways, that there's a struggle that continues into,
 242 when one isn't in training [and] as a professional as well because there's

243 **Par:** [yes]

244 **Int:** something of what the work is? [And] what, what you're being at a particular

245 **Par:** [yes]

246 **Int:** time?

247 **Par:** Yes, I think, yeah there, there's something about, trying to, (.hhh hhh) (1.0) trying
248 to fit, or trying to fit yourself to the situation, um and so in your training in
249 university that's perhaps, um you know whether that would be in a lecture or in an
250 essay in a piece of written work for example, um, and perhaps, I mean thinking
251 about my research, perhaps there's a sense that I, was inauth-, you know I wasn't
252 very authentic, > I didn't present a very authentic self in that < because I really
253 struggled to show my process of, (.hhh) um reflection and my process of
254 motivation to do the research, and perhaps, reading that the examiners felt that
255 actually that wasn't very authentic because, I wasn't very clear, in that, and I think
256 that, again is that conflict between, sort of being very very open, and feeling a
257 boundary =

258 **Int:** = o mm o =

259 **Par:** = and that was a boundary I imposed on myself, um (1.0) yeah and it was a
260 boundary I felt was necessary, because I didn't want to [be] any more open.

261 **Int:** [o mm o].

262 Maybe that shows something of, another conflict in that, maybe part of you
263 authentically didn't want to [{small laugh}], um but there's another aspect to

264 **Par:** [Yeah, yeah]

265 **Int:** authenticity which is about communicating something.

266 **Par:** Yes, communicating the struggle to be, authentic in a sense { 'authentic in a sense'
267 said with small laughter }, (.hhh), and that yes, I and I guess in a sense that comes
268 back to, the idea of actually well, if you're aware of, that you're not being open, is

269 that being authentic, as authentic, as if you were actually being open, how how do
 270 they sit together =

271 **Int:** = mmm =

272 **Par:** = or, are they opposites? I don't, I'm not sure. But there's th-, yeah there's
 273 something about that.

274 **Int:** Do you have any more thoughts on the, idea of boundaries in, [as a] professional

275 **Par:** [mm]

276 **Int:** with ○ authenticity ○?

277 **Par:** (.hhh) I think, I mean the the word that comes to mind there is self-disclosure and,
 278 and I think, there's (1.0) I, I'm quite, I'm quite big on boundaries, I'm very strict
 279 on timings, I, I'm not, I don't, very little self-disclosure, um at all really, and I
 280 suppose you know some of it is inevitable in terms of your, your expression, your
 281 affect, your um, things like, I mean I find things like um, you know, room
 282 temperature and, the the difficulty in the ro- coz one place I work at the moment
 283 (.hhh) is quite a cold room and it is quite bare, and it's quite, it's not a very nice
 284 room, and I, you know the patients come in and they, I think you know they
 285 assume it's my room in a sense and that I've created it like this (.hhh) and that
 286 feels quite dishonest, because what I really want to say to them is this isn't a very
 287 nice room it's really cold, but it's nothing to do with me {short quiet laugh}, it's
 288 not my choice that we're in this room {small laugh while speaking}, but, that, >
 289 you know < that's not, I don't know that, I mean that would, that's something,
 290 that's another aspect of the therapy perhaps that there would be, you know that
 291 there would be, you know perhaps there's something that, I think what I'm trying
 292 to say is, that is (.hhh) an aspect of therapy perhaps, but there's something about
 293 being, honest or, or I'm not quite sure.

294 **Int:** So there's something about the environment that shapes how much [you can]

295 **Par:** [yes, yes]

296 perhaps that's it =

297 **Int:** = either disclose or maybe, shapes the very experience? =

298 **Par:** = yes, I think so, yes and I think, I mean and it comes into different things as well

299 it comes into the model you're using, the approach you're using, (.hhh) it comes

300 into the setting, the context, the, you know the timing, yeah you know, how many

301 sessions do you have and (.hhh) you know wha- what's what's your, what are you

302 doing in the therapy, you know is it, is there areas, is it very goal focused, and you

303 know (.hhh) I guess if you're doing CBT perhaps it's, there's a different approach

304 to it perhaps there's a slightly different approach to it than if you're working

305 psychodynamically and, (.hhh) you are being much more of a, a blank therapist

306 but then, you know with twelve sessions in primary care, can you, you know, can

307 you do that? I, I'm not entirely sure that you can [or] that it is, the right way to

308 **Int:** [o mm o]

309 **Par:** work, so (.hhh) there's something about in practice, being authentic, being real,

310 being genuine, is (1.0) the, is, I suppose what I'm saying is that it's, how authentic

311 you can be, depends on lots of different factors I guess.

312 **Int:** Mm, some of them sound like the practical environment, the very theory, [how

313 **Par:** [yes]

314 **Int:** much] it encourages that kind of, particular way of relating or not, things like

315 that=

316 **Par:** = Yes, yes so, um, so I'm working psychodynamically at the moment and I've

317 (sort of) I've got very good psychodynamic supervision, so I am encouraged to,

318 think like that [and] think about what's going on in the room and think about my

319 **Int:** [○ mm ○]

320 **Par:** process and how, you know the impact of that and, and so on, and, that I think

321 allows for, that sort of authentic stuff, it it takes into consideration the fact that,

322 the room may be difficult or, this walk along the corridor or, the fact that the

323 patient reminds me of somebody else and that stirs something in me, um, whereas

324 I think perhaps, I was thinking of a colleague who, is working doing CBT and was

325 talking about a patient, in a supervision group, and (.hhh) everybody else in the

326 supervision group had quite a strong reaction of oh this patient sounds horrific ○

327 you know ○ they're so perfect it's just just awful I can't bear the thought of them,

328 whereas the therapist (.hhh) just thought they were the most lovely person and,

329 there was this sense that she couldn't quite get out of that way of looking, she

330 couldn't really understand where everybody got this, you know quite distasteful

331 reaction from, and there was something very, disconnected for her, I think, and I

332 think that was her training and her approach to the work, it didn't allow, and she

333 had no experience of, actually sort of reflecting on that, yet she knew that there

334 was something missing and that's why she'd brought it to supervision group

335 because she knew there was something missing and actually when people started

336 talking about it, she really struggled, to say, to understand in a sense I think that

337 she was allowed to feel like this about the person, um, so yes I think in practice,

338 there are, lots of different factors that influence, (> I suppose I was gonna say <)

339 how authentic you can be, but also how, authentic you allow yourself to be? =

340 **Int:** = mm =

341 **Par:** = And, yes yeah I think there's a lot about, allowing yourself and finding a way of

342 working where you can be honest and you can be, au- authentic and present an

343 authentic self and feel that you're being authentic within a system I suppose, and
 344 =

345 **Int:** = the system, the system sets limits =

346 **Par:** = yes =

347 **Int:** = and different models, open it up in different [ways].

348 **Par:** [yeah], yeah.

349 **Int:** Can you say more about what you think, it is about something like CBT that
 350 would limit, authenticity?

351 **Par:** I think, there's a (hhh), I think, I guess I'm a little bit hesitant because I, have
 352 done some CBT but I haven't done a huge amount and, I don't think I was terribly
 353 good at it {small laugh while saying 'terribly good at it'} (.hhh), um because most
 354 of the work that I've done has been from a a psy- more psychodynamic, well from
 355 a psychodynamic approach, [um], and wa- was psychodynamically, um

356 **Int:** [mm]

357 **Par:** influenced anyway I would say, rather than you know, it's not straight
 358 psychoanalytical work by any means {small laugh while saying 'work by any
 359 means'} but with those influences (.hhh) but I think within the CBT, the and
 360 certainly with the CBT supervision I've had, you are not encouraged to, and the
 361 importance, the emphasis isn't placed on the process between you =

362 **Int:** = o right o =

363 **Par:** = is my understanding (.hhh) and I know that there is a lot written about the
 364 relationship in CBT, and the, the therapeutic relationship in CBT and how that
 365 works and stuff and I, I, I know that there is stuff written about looking at the
 366 relational or what's going on between you but I think that was my experience of

367 doing CBT the (.hhh) there wasn't in the sessions or in the, the supervision, there
368 wasn't the space for that ↑ =

369 **Int:** = o mm o =

370 **Par:** = Um.

371 **Int:** So when, when you were saying that, there's something about the psychodynamic
372 model that perhaps encourages and allows for authenticity, it's because of that
373 mutual focus on the client and yourself, is there then something about authenticity
374 that is about (1.0) the there being two people, there being something that happens
375 with two rather than [one].

376 **Par:** [Yes], I think, yes it's something about being (1.0) open to
377 looking at what's going on for both the therapist and the patient or client (1.0)
378 yes, so it is that sense of looking at yourself in relation to the other person, I think,
379 and you're encouraging, the client to look at their process in relation to working
380 with you, (.hhh) so I was thinking of somebody that I'm working with, who is um
381 she she actually works as a prostitute, and for her to tell me that was incredibly
382 difficult =

383 **Int:** = o mm o =

384 **Par:** = um she really struggled to tell me but she wanted to tell me coz she'd been to
385 some therapy before and hadn't told the therapist (.hhh) and it just meant that they
386 couldn't do anything because it was such an important part of her identity, and the
387 things it brought with it, the shame it brought, the embarrassment, that she carried,
388 meant that she just couldn't work with this therapist because there was this huge
389 part of her that was missing, and when she told me, it meant that I, in a sense and
390 we, talked about her feeling of shame, and embarrassment, and her expectation of
391 being judged and it really made me, think about, my own thoughts about her

392 work, and what she's doing and, her difficulty telling me and, you know am I
393 judging her, was I judging her, what was I thinking about it, my preconceptions
394 and my, stereotypes and, the feelings for her, and feelings about the kind of work
395 that she's doing, and, I, there was space to think about that, in the session, and in
396 supervision particularly as well, my supervisor encouraged me to think about ○
397 some of these feelings ○ and I think because (.hhh) I was in that sort of process of
398 thinking, I could talk about it in supervision quite easily, and, it yeah, and it
399 means that an area of work that I mm- have-, > sort of <, I've fou- you know
400 there's bits of working with this girl that I have found quite difficult because
401 there's this whole kind of world of prostitution that I don't, you know, [I

402 **Int:** [○ mm ○]

403 **Par:** don't] know about and I don't understand and I've, you know, had to ask some
404 questions about various things, and, (.hhh) I suppose it's it's trying to find a way
405 to be honest with her, that, yes I don't, you know, it feels like you know it is a
406 completely different world, but I'm open to hearing about it? I think? It's
407 something about, yes that within, the psychodynamic, approach there is, a space
408 and an encouragement to think about what's going on between the two of [you].

409 **Int:** [○ mm]

410 mm ○

411 **Par:** Um, and (.hhh) I think there's also the language to do that, and I think that really
412 helps you know you, you use words of transference and counter-transference, and
413 you use the words of um (1.0) while you're thinking about your own experiences
414 and having said the language helps I can't think of any {laugh} of the language at
415 the moment, but there is the, it's there within the model.

416 **Int:** Yeah, [well] transference and counter-[trans]ference are very sort of powerful

417 **Par:** [whereas] [yes]

418 **Int:** [words] aren't they.

419 **Par:** [yeah] And I think the difference for me ,with CBT is that, I

420 don't know that there are the words, the language for that and certainly in the

421 CBT supervision I've had, there wasn't the language, for that, and when I tried to

422 look at it from a more psychodynamic approach, the the counter-transference for

423 example, my supervisor wasn't, wasn't' able to help me with that really.

424 **Int:** It puts me in mind of what you said at the beginning as well, about authenticity

425 (.hhh) in part being about connection =

426 **Par:** = mm=

427 **Int:** = and that there's something about your client sharing the truth, that she wasn't

428 able to share before =

429 **Par:** = mm =

430 **Int:** = then allowed you together, to create something that was, that was a more

431 authentic therapy because it was about how you, both were really feeling about

432 [each] other.

433 **Par:** [Yes] Yes I think so and I think (1.0) yes because it did it meant we could

434 connect with that, and you know where I'm sure there are things, where we've

435 missed a connection =

436 **Int:** = o mm o =

437 **Par:** = you know, there will inevitably always be things where you miss a connection

438 or you, you know (.hhh) you get it wrong, but, that was a big connection that if we

439 hadn't made, the work just, it would have been impossible, we wouldn't have

440 been able to do it I don't think because it, it is such a kind of central part of, her

441 identity, and (.hhh) not just so much, her identity but a central part of what she

442 brings, to the sessions, why she is there, um because a lot of the sort of factors
 443 influencing that, that actually if I didn't understand the work that she's doing now,
 444 they wouldn't make sense, so, um, yes there's something about connection ○
 445 definitely ○.

446 **Int:** Ok, (.hhh) and I was going to ask what you thought, some of the barriers or
 447 difficulties of authenticity are, and it sounds like that's, partly what you've been
 448 answering =

449 **Par:** = mmm =

450 **Int:** = so using CBT as an example, it sounds like, one of the barriers you see is not
 451 having a language or a space =

452 **Par:** = yes =

453 **Int:** = attention given to, reflecting on [your] sort of response to [the] client.

454 **Par:** [yes] [yeah] (.hhh).

455 Yes I think it's, I think there's it's not having the attention, and I think that's
 456 something I worry about, for myself because I've stopped personal therapy and I
 457 do, and I'm not having as much supervision as I've had, for example when on
 458 placements and things, and I do, not necessarily worry but I guess I am concerned,
 459 that, I don't have enough space and that maybe I haven't developed enough of an
 460 internal supervisor yet to, to manage that, and, I know how, from my own
 461 experience I know how important supervision is for allowing that process, of
 462 reflection, and personal therapy for allowing that process, and so I suppose I am
 463 concerned and I think, for myself and how I manage that, as I, you know as I
 464 progressed in my career, and I stopped personal therapy for a variety of reasons
 465 but part of it was because I felt like I, I'd been doing it for sort of over three and a
 466 half years continuously, and (.hhh) and I wanted an opportunity to see [I think]

467 **Int:** [○ mm ○]

468 **Par:** how I managed it, um so almost a bit of an experiment really and I know I will go
469 back to personal therapy, at you know different times in my life, but I'm not
470 putting in (or aware of) a date on it, and I, I wanted to see how I would manage,
471 and, I, I think it has also, really reminded me of the value of therapy, that it does
472 give you that dedicated space, to reflect, um (1.0), it m- means that it's built into
473 your week then, that there is this space, because it's difficult to do that otherwise,
474 and in work, you know you've got a heavy caseload there isn't time to do that,
475 um.

476 **Int:** So is it, could it, are you saying that, as you get into work and perhaps the- you've
477 got this increased case[load] and more demands and one of the barriers to

478 **Par:** [mm]

479 **Int:** authenticity might be not having so much, like you say therapy or supervision, or
480 space to reflect?

481 **Par:** Yes, yes I think and that, I think sometime- some people are probably very good
482 at managing that themselves um, you know whether they build that in to their day
483 somehow um and I think I, I do it, I haven't built it into my week in a dedicated
484 time slot, I think I do a bit of it here and there =

485 **Int:** = ○ mm ○ =

486 **Par:** but I think there's something about having, a specific time, and I suppose that's
487 something about boundaries as well there because you, you give yourself a space
488 and then that means it's, (sort of saying) it's almost like it's covered, you know
489 you're doing it (.hhh) =

490 **Int:** = ○ mm ○ =

515 person they present, it's not part of the person you see or you talk to, because it is,
 516 it's so locked up in them, I don't mean it should be part of your every
 517 conversation or that it's part of you know, you talk about it every time you see
 518 them (.hhh) but it's also, I think it's partly something about, avoid- you know
 519 these are large topics of conversation that you avoid, there's all these different
 520 areas of life that you avoid talking about and, I know that there are a lot of
 521 emotions around for both of them, around losing their mothers that they just
 522 haven't (1.0) I don't know if dealt with is the right word, but that they haven't
 523 confronted I suppose, um and that, makes something very unreal about them, um.
 524 **Int:** So there's something about when some- when it's inauthentic, there's, it's
 525 something that's really shut off=
 526 **Par:** = yeah =
 527 **Int:** = and [blocked out].
 528 **Par:** [yeah] Yeah, and I think for these two friends particularly, it feels
 529 like that, I mean one, one much more so than the other, one manages it very, I
 530 suppose more efficiently, in a sense, she has a very good relationship with her
 531 boyfriend, she, she works very well, she's very efficient in her job, you know she
 532 is, y- you know, to all intents and purposes doing incredibly well, whereas the
 533 other one, is not, you know she has a good job, she does it very well I think, but,
 534 her personal life is a mess, and I think that is something to do with, um, the other
 535 one has almost too efficiently kind of shut it off =
 536 **Int:** = o mm o =
 537 **Par:** = and this one just, she can't she's desperately trying to shut it away, but she can't
 538 and, yes I suppose it comes back to that idea of connections, connection within
 539 yourself =

540 **Int:** = o mm mm o

541 **Par:** Um =

542 **Int:** = o mm o and it shows what you were saying about authenticity isn't necessarily
543 about what one says =

544 **Par:** [= no]

545 **Int:** [coz] you said it's not about expecting them to sort of say it in con[versation]

546 **Par:** [no, no]

547 **Int:** it's something more about their way of being?

548 **Par:** Yes, yes it is, it is much more about their way of being, than of their way of
549 saying, you know the what they're saying I think, um, yes and that's a difficult
550 thing to (.hhh) to sort of put into words, to describe completely, because I mean
551 how would they be different =

552 **Int:** = o mm o =

553 **Par:** = if they had, confronted these feelings, I don't know, but I guess, I can only look
554 at myself in that and think well how am I different in having confronted some
555 very difficult feelings about the job {name}'s doing and the work and the fact that
556 he's away, and the fact that he chooses to be away from me for six months of the
557 year and how that makes me feel (.hhh) and those were you know, those have
558 been very very difficult feelings to, confront, but actually having confronted them
559 I feel, more whole I suppose, um, and actually, having confronted them, and faced
560 them and been open with him about them and other people about them, it's easier,
561 to manage him being away =

562 **Int:** = o mm o =

563 **Par:** = I don't get so lonely, um, and I I guess that's part of, I suppose in terms your
564 grief work, there's something about that isn't there =

590 this one whole kind of thing rather than split, but perhaps it's about, helping them,
591 in short-term work it's about helping them, understand that there's this split and
592 recognising it, and recognising perhaps where it has come from, and thinking
593 about how they, they manage to make a whole, and where they can get the help to
594 do that, and it's not necessarily something we can do in primary care there's just
595 not enough, time, and we ca- you know we can't do that, and I think you know
596 when we're talking about depression and, it, we talk about the psychodynamic
597 approach that it's part of that split self and, if we can help, () excuse me, help
598 people understand that that's what it is then, they can come back to it =

599 **Int:** = o mm o =

600 **Par:** = um.

601 **Int:** and do you think it's possible to reach that state of, wholeness or something that
602 feels very authentic?

603 **Par:** (.hhh) I don't know, I mean I guess there's something very idealistic in it isn't
604 there and I think, when I started training, my sense was that that's what my
605 therapist would be, she was this completely whole, and actually I had two
606 therapists during the training and the first one I stopped with, partly because I, I
607 felt like she wasn't. =

608 **Int:** = o mm o =

609 **Par:** = there was and I remember I fe- I really, in our very last session she was dressed
610 completely different than how she was normally dressed and I was thinking well o
611 maybe she must be o, she looked like she was going out for the afternoon or
612 something, (.hhh) and, and I remember feeling quite, like I'd made the right
613 decision to stop seeing her because there was something so different, that actually
614 there was, and maybe that would have been something that we should have talked

615 about, I don't know, I mean thinking about it now and if I was in that situation
616 now, I think I'd be able to bring that, and say you know, part of the reason I want
617 to end is because actually I don't feel like, well no, part of it was I think, that she
618 didn't live up to this kind of idealistic, sense that I had when I started that this is
619 what a therapist should be somebody who has clearly managed all of these things
620 for herself =

621 **Int:** = o mm o =

622 **Par:** = (.hhh) and I was very aware although I couldn't necessarily have put it into
623 words, that there was something that she wasn't managing, because there was
624 something about the way she approached {name}'s work, her, her feelings about
625 it, that weren't, there was something missing for her there I think, and I'm not
626 sure I quite realised it, at the time I knew there was something not, it didn't feel
627 right with this women, that I wanted to change, (.hhh) and I suppose, with my
628 second therapist I had much more of a sense that she had, worked at this, to, find a
629 way to be, very real, um (1.0) and I wonder maybe if that was something in their
630 training, something in their experience, my second therapist was a Jungian analyst
631 and, although I was seeing her for once a week therapy, sort of psychodynamic
632 psychotherapy rather than, Jungian analysis, she had that, underneath, you know I
633 know she had been in long-term therapy for herself, and I think maybe there was
634 something different and she was a lot more experienced than the first therapist I
635 saw so, (.hhh) there is this very idealistic sense that one can present this
636 completely [authentic sense]

637 **Int:** [it's going along side] what you're saying about something being
638 more convincing [as well]

639 **Par:** [yes] yeah and I think, I feel since doing the training and my own
640 therapy and client work (.hhh) with friends who do seem to present this quite kind
641 of inauthentic self, I feel less patient.

642 **Int:** mm

643 **Par:** Or I feel rather impatient with them I think, um, yes, I, I do, and I notice it =

644 **Int:** = you sense that they're being that way =

645 **Par:** = yeah, yeah, I do and I find it quite frustrating, because, you know there's your
646 role as a friend and you're not their therapist you're a friend and it's some very
647 long-standing friendships and yet, there's something there that just feels,
648 [uncomfortable].

649 **Int:** [And that raises] interesting dilemmas for authenticity [as well], coz it's like, do

650 **Par:** [yes]

651 **Int:** you,wh- wh- what part of you do you then bring [in to] that relationship [when]

652 **Par:** [yeah] [yeah]

653 **Int:** your authentic response [is quite] irritated you can [see] this stuff =

654 **Par:** [yeah] [yeah] = yeah =

655 **Int:** [or] is that bringing your professional you into [what was] a friendship that didn't

656 **Par:** [yeah]

657 **Int:** have that before =

658 **Par:** = Yeah and it yes it does, it changes the dynamic, and it makes you, and I think
659 that's taking me quite a, you know that's taken four years to, to, you know, I
660 haven't found the answer by any means, I think I've found more of an answer, I
661 think I tend now to think of myself as the friend who would say things that other
662 friends wouldn't say, um.

663 **Int:** So that's you trying to keep the sense of whole [as well] isn't it [that]

664 **Par:** [yes] [yes]

665 **Int:** being authentic with your friends means staying true to something of, [what] you

666 **Par:** [yes]

667 **Int:** hear?

668 **Par:** Something of, something of my training as well =

669 **Int:** = right =

670 **Par:** and something of, that this is part of me, um that actually it's imp- yes that it's

671 very important to me, now, to be that real person, and yes, in a sense actually

672 thinking that, I do have quite a split in that I have a, I practice under my maiden

673 name and I, have a life in my married name =

674 **Int:** = o mm o =

675 **Par:** = and that's a very purposeful split, it's something I decided I would do and, made

676 a conscious effort to do {sniff}, so there is that kind of split, but I don't, and I

677 maybe that, you know it's not like I take my wedding ring off when I go to work,

678 but there is something perhaps, I don't know, [I don't know].

679 **Int:** [What does] that provide for you?

680 **Par:** Well there was something I wan-, it was quite a big decision, I spent a long time

681 thinking about it but it was something about privacy.

682 **Int:** It sounded like the boundary [thing almost] then.

683 **Par:** [Yes, yes] I think it was and I think it

684 was also, I thought quite a lot about it and thinking, in sort of terms of, you know,

685 gender issues and women, taking their husbands name and you know old ideas of

686 ownership and stuff, and then actually I thought well, perhaps actually this is an

687 area where I have an option that men don't have, um I can, you know, have a

688 married name and it was important to me actually that, we did something joint

689 that was together and it was part of our joint identify (.hhh) but actually I can also
690 have this identity that is about work and, and so I think on a, sort of, there is this
691 kind of split in terms of name, yet they're both still me and I think, this idea in
692 sort of in friendships particularly is a way of trying to, express both, that I am me
693 as the friend but there is this other, you know there's a whole I think rather than
694 being split, my name might be different, but actually, I am a whole person, and I
695 would like to think that, I would, that's what people see I think.

696 **Int:** So it's possible to have different identities, your married identity, your work
697 identity, but it sounds like it feels important to, within that have a sense of
698 continuity [that's] sort of, you're happy to own [as all] you.

699 **Par:** [yes] [yes] yes, yeah, I think
700 so and tha- and there's something just made me think about, when you, you've
701 people who go out and get drunk and change, are very different, and actually,
702 there's something very, obviously there's the effect of the alcohol and something,
703 but there's something very (.hhh) unreal about that then, about that split, that
704 there's this part that can only come out with the alcohol and actually is kind of
705 disowned in sober normal life, and I think it's been quite important for me, over
706 the last few years to try and find a way of being, me, whether I am, at home with
707 {name}, at work, with my parents, with friends, and there are obviously different
708 parts of me that are at the fore, but I'm still me, and I think that is something that
709 is quite, is relatively new and I think it is definitely a result of training and therapy
710 =

711 **Int:** = o mm o

712 **Par:** and I think in my previous job as a teacher I always felt like I was acting, I was
713 putting, I was very much putting on a mask, and I, struggled with that, I found it

714 really difficult, um, because you stand up in front of a class and you are somebody
 715 different and you have to be and there's a survival mechanism in that, um and I
 716 think often when you meant people who are very, inauthentic in that sense there is
 717 a survival mechanism in that =

718 **Int:** = protection =

719 **Par:** = yeah, yeah and I think perhaps, (.hhh) changing career has meant that I haven't
 720 needed that survival mechanism, um =

721 **Int:** = So for you personally, there's something really, um valuable? In the way that
 722 training and, the practice, of counselling [psychology], is sort [of], um, sees this

723 **Par:** [mmm] [mm]

724 **Int:** authentic [kind] of thing, that before you felt there was a mask and now you've

725 **Par:** [yes, yeah]

726 **Int:** found something that you feel [brings] more of this?

727 **Par:** [yeah] And I think in that sense I
 728 feel like I've found, what I was looking for, and, and I think back, to when I was
 729 thinking about doing this course, and, thinking about the training, looking ahead
 730 to, you know, well do I want to do this, is this what I want to do, (.hhh) and I
 731 wasn't aware of this aspect of it, but it must somehow have appealed, there must
 732 have been something in it that appealed, and I couldn't say you know what that
 733 was, it wasn't conscious by any means, um, and actually, actually that makes me
 734 think coz in my interview, for the PsychD, the interviewer got half way through
 735 and she said, she said I'm going to stop you because I can't, I don't think I can
 736 really hear what your motivation for this is and, I've always wondered about that,
 737 but actually, I wonder if I just wasn't consciously aware of what my motivation
 738 was, really =

739 **Int:** = ◦ mm ◦ =

740 **Par:** = and, when I think about it now, you know that (.hhh) sense of being really me, I
741 think is, I think I've gained most.

742 **Int:** It sounds like you [feel] you've gained a lot, maybe more of a space to do [it in]?

743 **Par:** [yeah] [yes,
744 yeah] and I think that's, something that I know for me, or when I think about my
745 career ahead, I think about psychodynamic work because it, it provides I know it
746 provides for me a way, to do that, and perhaps I will find that at different times in
747 life in other approaches or models, or ways of working, or contexts of working,
748 but at the moment, that's where I can see that I will get that, and that's something
749 I know I need, that space to reflect, to allow the difficult feelings to come through,
750 to own them, accept them, to acknowledge, to understand, to reflect on them, and,
751 I know I need that kind of contact, to kind of kind of maintain that I suppose, that
752 sense of being real and being me and (.hhh) and being me as a, a whole person I
753 suppose, rather than, and I suppose I come back to that idea of split and
754 connections and stuff.

755 **Int:** ◦ Mm ◦

756 **Par:** ◦ Yeah ◦

757 **Int:** ◦ Ok ◦ (1.0) one last thing then [that] I'd just like to check with you and er,

758 **Par:** [ok]

759 **Int:** obviously you have touched on this [throughout] what you've been saying (1.0)

760 **Par:** [◦ hm mm ◦]

761 **Int:** but could you describe, or try and put into words, how you know when
762 authenticity is present.

763 **Par:** (.hhh hhh) that's difficult isn't it {smiling}, I think (hhh), I think it's sometimes
764 (2.0) I guess actually for me the way I would do it, is in terms of
765 countertransference is that you can feel it, um so for example the patient I was
766 talking about at the very beginning who is incredibly split, actually, as she talks
767 about these very moving experiences of her brother dying, you don't feel
768 anything, I don't feel sad, I don't particularly feel moved, I can kind of feel move
769 intellectually, but emotionally, I don't feel it, and I think that is, a bit for me, is a
770 big clue, and I think again, working psychodynamically gives me the language to
771 explain that and to understand that, um, and I think in sort of personal
772 relationships it's something similar, it's when you, feel that everything's very
773 much on the surface that, and that doesn't mean that you have to be talking about
774 deep dark feelings, emotions, but, it's, not feeling that they're cut off from you,
775 it's feeling that if you wanted to say you were pissed off about this, you could say
776 it, and it wouldn't [be cut off from you]

777 **Int:** [so something of freedom?]

778 **Par:** Yeah, it, it, I think it is, it's a sense
779 of freedom, and it's a sense, for me the knowing something is authentic or
780 somebody is being authentic with me is very much about feeling that they are, and
781 it's not necessarily something that I could kind of put into intellectualize, but it is
782 kind of a gut response I suppose, that something's not, hidden or cut off from you,
783 I think.

784 **Int:** I think that's the hard bit to put into words isn't it that it is, a sense =

785 **Par:** = yes =

786 **Int:** = a kind of gut [sense]

787 **Par:** [yes] and it is quite a, intuitive thing I suppose, and, and I guess
788 that, you know, it's not necessarily something you could measure, or, you know,
789 I'm sure somebody's come up with something {small laugh} but it's, it's difficult
790 to, yeah, to, to objecti- objectify I suppose, um or look at objectively in that sense
791 because, it's not, yes, it is's something it does feel quite subjective, [and], I don't
792 **Int:** [mm]
793 **Par:** know whether friends would say, about me or what they would say about me in
794 terms of being different or, ○ feeling seeing me different ○, so, you know, is it
795 something that I've, a process I feel I've gone through =
796 **Int:** = mm =
797 **Par:** = do other people recognise it, I don't know, I'm not sure, it would be quite
798 [interesting to find out] actually, yes yeah, start asking all MY FRIENDS
799 **Int:** [it would be interesting]
800 **Par:** {small laugh} what they think of, if they think I've changed or not, um.
801 **Int:** {small laugh} It's certainly something you sense within [yourself], with oth[ers]
802 **Par:** [yes] [yeah]
803 **Int:** and for yourself =
804 **Par:** = yes.
805 **Int:** ○ Mm ○.
806 **Par:** Yeah.
807 **Int:** ○ Ok ○ is there anything else that's come to mind that I haven't asked or that you
808 want to mention?
809 **Par:** Um, I don't think so, I think that covers ○ everything, (that's something) we've

810 talked about ○, yeah, no, yeah, that's, that's everything.

811 **Int:** Yeah? Lovely. Thank you.

812 **Par:** Very, very interesting.

[End of recorded material]

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